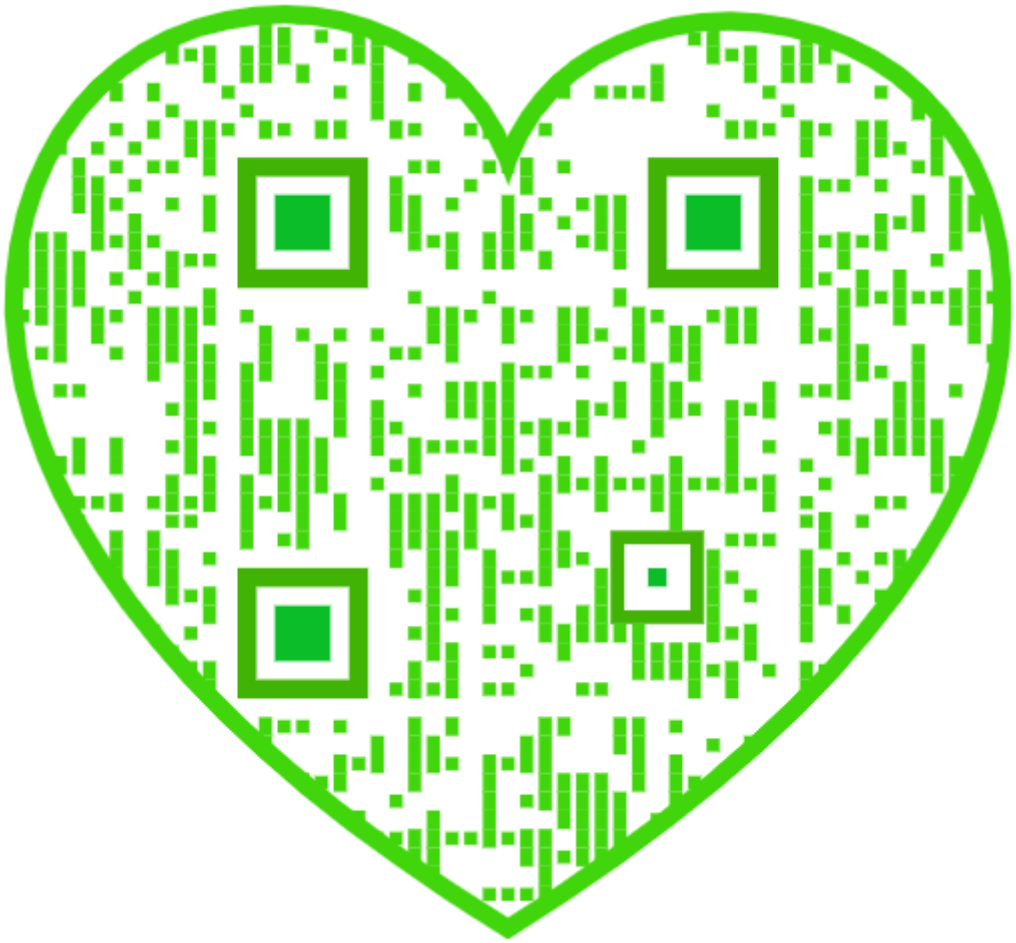
Common-Sense Christianity

ALONZO H. QUINT



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Common-Sense Christianity

BEING MANY OF THE

"CONGREGATIONALIST" ARTICLES

OF

ALONZO HALL QUINT, D. D.

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PREFACE.

For many years the fortnightly articles by Dr. Quint have been one of the attractive features of *The Congregationalist*. Many of these articles have been suggested by questions of Christian casuistry or church administration, or concerning Christian doctrine and experience — questions received by him in a very extensive correspondence. Over his profound legal and ecclesiastical knowledge, his keen insight into human nature, his kindly sympathy, his piety, his delicate sense of humor, and his inimitable style have combined to give these papers a somewhat unique place in current literature. They have now been gathered into a volume, partly in fulfilment of a purpose which he had in mind, and partly in response to the requests which have been coming for many years, and which have become urgent since his death. He long held a place without a peer in the Congregational denomination as an interpreter of its history and its usages. He was a counsellor widely sought by those in perplexity or need. His words often banished doubts, illuminated dark places, gave hope and cheer. Those who have read these papers will prize them the more in this permanent form. Others, we are confident, will find here much to enjoy, and much to uplift and guide. May this book perpetuate the usefulness of a noble man, a wise Christian leader, a true friend.

A. E. DUNNING.

Boston, June 1, 1897.

CONTENTS.

Church and Pulpit 1

The Law and the Gospel 39

Home and the Family 72

Lessons from Life 87

Common-Sense Christianity.

CHURCH AND PULPIT.

Concerning Club-Houses.

MANY people are prejudiced against clubs and club-houses. The name is enough to condemn either. Is this reasonable? Not entirely so. Every case must be judged on its own merits. Certainly, an association of a limited number of persons, who unite their monies to provide a suitable place for personal enjoyment, often with libraries and other facilities for improvement, is not necessarily evil. Nor is it any injustice to the public, that the club restricts its privileges to members of its own body, except by inviting, at its own pleasure, persons not members.

I suppose, however, that the apparent exclusiveness is a source of prejudice. Why should it be? Only a moderate number can be accommodated in any one club-house. Moreover, the members have themselves paid the cost of it. Others can institute a new club, and build a new club-house.

I have, however, lately had experience as to the exclusiveness of a club, which made it quite troublesome.

In the town where my family has been temporarily placed, there is a club whose superior privileges I wish to enjoy. I can enjoy them by invitations from time to time, but I greatly prefer to do it as a right, and to meet my share of the expenses. One does not like to be beholden, even to friends, all the time.

This club, unlike many, admits favored women and children to its advantages; and my desire to get admission has been mainly for my family's sake. For a whole year have I tried in vain.

This particular club was formed some years ago. It erected a brick building, capacious and handsome. It has literary and other exercises of a very superior order, and often has music. In fact, it is high-toned, and first class. Its personal rights of property are somewhat peculiar. Instead of owning all in common, it had the builder draw lines on the entire broad lower floor, erect private boxes according to these lines, and put doors to the boxes, and fastenings on the doors. And each member of the club is an owner of a private box in fee, which also descends to his heirs. When the club-house is to be occupied, into his own box goes the owner, with his family and any other he chooses to invite; and he shuts the door and fastens it.

In this particular club the owner, as such, pays no part of the expenses attending the occupancy of the club-house, except for keeping the shingles tight, mending any broken glass, and for an occasional coat of paint. Nothing

Concerning Club-Houses.

can be required of him, even for coal or the pay of the janitor; and, of course, nothing for the cost of any music, speakers, and the like. All such expenses are met by contributions of the generous. A member of the club, that is, a proprietor, that is, a box-holder, may enjoy all the advantages of the club-house for all his life, and never pay one cent for its superior privileges. He can, if he chooses, lease his box, and pocket the rent.

But a great difficulty here is, that some box-owners who rarely occupy any portion will not lease any part to those who would occupy. Hence there are some empty boxes, while other persons (for instance, myself and family) earnestly desire the privileges.

Nor have I, nor has anybody else, on the theory and practice of this club-house, any right to complain. The owners paid their money honestly; their boxes are their own private property; and it is nobody's business. If any people do not like it, they can build another club-house. Only, that is beyond my power, or my desire.

Of course, everybody knows that this particular club-house is a meeting-house. I have sometimes heard it called a House of God.

I want to know what to do. For more than a year have I tried to get reasonable accommodation for my family. I have tried to hire sittings enough. Our number is not very large; yet have they been divided around into three parts of the house, and some of them, even then, dependent on the courtesy of friends. Two of them had regular sittings a while in a spot where every opening of the door sent a deluge of cold air on their necks; and only two sittings at that. Courtesy continually says to me: "Bring them into my pew any time." Yes, but, first, I want my children to sit together, and two parents, if both are there, cannot sit in three places; secondly, I want to pay for the sittings.

I take this as a sample case. What are the difficulties? Is the church crowded? No. There is a good congregation, but it would be greatly increased if sittings could be furnished. Is the house small? No. Six tiers of pews, of liberal dimensions. This club-house system is here a weight around the neck of a remarkably able and successful minister. The trouble is, pews have been inherited. Owners will not part with them. Many owners decline to rent any sittings to anybody, even if they have one or five at liberty. Persons have told me how long and patiently they waited, before they could get any accommodations, while there were plenty of vacant sittings every Sunday and successive months.

You know there are four systems as to pews. (1.) Where pews are owned in fee, not subject to any taxation for current expenses. (2.) Where pews are owned by individuals, but subject to taxation for current expenses, according to a fixed original valuation. (3.) Where pews are owned by the society, and rented either annually or continuously. (4.) Where all sittings are absolutely free.

There are objections, of course, to each method. But incomparably the worst, and, in the present state of society, inexcusable, is the first. We know how it originated, and that then its evils were not experienced. Now it is a barbarism. It enables an owner to enjoy all the advantages of the church,

and never pay a cent therefor, as does the fourth above; but, unlike the fourth, it enables him to prevent the growth of a congregation. It makes what is called a house of God simply a club-house, whose owners have contrived to have comforts for themselves and families and invited guests; or, what a theatre would be if it was all private boxes owned by individuals without taxation or rental. Anything more different can hardly be imagined — this system from one where a building is supposed to be erected, in which one is to preach the gospel to all who will listen. Not a meeting-house; a club-house. The club being, not the church, but the pew owners.

What can one do? Go elsewhere? But here is the form of worship and the kind of doctrine my family prefer. Here is a minister whom I esteem for his intellectual power, and love for his great, generous heart. Here is the house where I was led when I was a mere child, every inch of whose walls is familiar to me. Here are the men I knew and honored as I grew in years. And in this house, and in the seat where he had been for forty years, my dear and honored father, an officer of its church, sat only the day before God suddenly called him up higher. Can I take my children elsewhere, while his grave is under only its first snow?

Church Discipline.

What It Is, and What It Ought to Be.

In the year 1863, a regiment, falling back in obedience to command, faced about in their light entrenchments. Dead and wounded lay on the meadow. One poor fellow, some rods outside, was trying to pull himself along toward shelter. Said an officer, "Who will go out and bring in that man? No," he instantly added, "I'll go myself." He leaped the low breastwork, ran down the slope, lifted the wounded man in his muscular arms, and amidst pattering bullets brought the man safely in. That is the gospel idea of church discipline. Go out and bring the wounded brother in.

Is it the prevailing idea? No. A common idea of church discipline is that it is the method of getting rid of an obnoxious member; cutting off, not saving, only taking care to observe all the "steps" in a lawful manner. The word "discipline" itself is misunderstood. Ordinarily it is used as if it meant only the infliction of penalties. Does one forget that it comes from the same root as the word "disciple"?

But the perverted use of the word "discipline" is not always treated fairly. If discipline applied only to offences, as is too commonly supposed, the object of that discipline is too apt to be punishment, not salvation. But our Lord makes the object plain. "If he will hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." To gain the wandering brother is the object of discipline. Is it too much to say that that is rather the exception in practice?

Brethren who feel that a brother has erred cannot make the restoration of the offender too decided an object in their minds and hearts. The church should not be considered as a kind of debating society, or fire company, with penalties for infraction of rules. The formal steps, — citation, trial, verdict, judgment, — are not the main features in dealing with offenders. The Master

Church Discipline.

wants them saved, and a church should have no other end in view in its steps of discipline. The first step, so-called, should therefore be for this object. "Go, tell him his fault between thee and him alone," if he has trespassed. Who shall go? "Ye that are spiritual." How? "In the spirit of meekness." The first "step" is not a merely necessary preliminary to a second, as some consider. It should be the exhortation of a meek, spiritual, prayerful elder, "with tears in his voice." It should be gentle, loving, although true and faithful.

Experiences in difficult hearings, in cases of grievance, give one some insight, often painful. In one case, a neighbor called in the evening, lay upon a sofa, chatted an hour, casually remarked that the difficulty between his host and another member was unfortunate, and left. The surprise of that host was very great, when he subsequently learned that this one remark was the "first step in discipline."

In another case a brother called at a house, said, simply, "I notify you that this is the first step in church discipline," and abruptly left. In another case a church summoned up a conversation which, it was found, took place two months before the alleged offence, and called it the "first step." In another, every formality was observed, but with a coldness calculated solely to harden.

Persons seem to feel that this "first step" is a very unpleasant but necessary formality, dread it, get through it somehow, and rejoice in escaping. The first step of my soldier was to go out and bring the sufferer in. Is that the difference between a church and a regiment?

What is the "second step"? It is where a single brother is not strong enough to succeed, and he takes one or two more with him to lift the wounded soldier and bring him back; or if he resists, and prefers to remain where the enemy will get him, they are sad witnesses to the failure and to his fault. But these two or three should go in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love.

In one case I recall where one had gone with another just half an hour before the meeting of the church, coldly notified him that this was the "second step," and informed him that charges would be made before the church that evening. The visitor was asked if any prayer was made at that interview. "No," said he, "praying would do no good." No time was allowed for thought by the alleged offender, no entreaty, no reasoning had. "That was the second step." Did they visit to save, or to cut off, — which?

But if Christian argument and entreaty and prayer fail, and the church must hear the complaint, its object still is to reform. A due statement of the alleged offence, with its specifications, must be laid before the church, and before the brother complained of. For it must be remembered that he may deny any cause of offence, and is entitled to be presumed guiltless. He must have proper time to prepare for explanation. He must be met face to face by witnesses before the church, and the church must not allow a brother or sister to be assailed by testimony of somebody who will testify before some committee, but is too mean to come before the church with the tale. The church should hear calmly, without prejudice, without respect of persons, and with much prayer. A result adverse to the alleged offender should rest upon irreproachable evidence. If such a vote is reached, then the church is not a mere

court, to pass sentence and cast him out. Its duty is to admonish him, not merely by a formal vote, but by the instrumentality of some spiritual and sweet-tempered Christians. Give him time to reflect. If all fails to save, the Word of God warrants, at last, the separation of the offender. "Have no company with him, that he may be ashamed, yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

Too often the formal charge, the formal opening prayer (sometimes, as I know, itself condemning before hearing), the formal trial, the formal verdict, are followed at once by sentence of excommunication, and some prejudice, or party feeling, or personal influence, is satisfied. Or if suspension is vetoed —I know a case where it was instantly voted for a year, to be followed (if satisfaction was not made) by excommunication without further action; and that year expired without a single effort or word to that suspended person.

That is what many understand by "church discipline." The Word of God tells a different story, viz.: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death."

"Church discipline," as ordinarily used, means, cut him off, and let the enemy have him. The gospel discipline is, go out and seize the brother wounded by the missiles of the enemy, and bring him inside the works.

Is a Church a Prison?

INDEED, is it such a prison that even the church itself has no power to allow a member to leave it, who, although clearly innocent of all wrong doing in the sense of immorality, is as clearly out of place in the church and ought not to be there?

I will suppose a clear case. A boy comes into the church, ignorantly and thoughtlessly asserting to the creed. As he comes to be a man, he finds that he has drifted away from the creed, and perhaps from the faith itself, of that church. After much thought and trouble of heart, he frankly informs the church of his condition, and asks to be released from such engagement as makes him a member of that body. If he was contented to be a hypocrite, he could have remained quiet, but being conscientious, he has taken an honorable course.

But this honorable course gets him into trouble. If an old usage prevails, he is told that there are three ways out of a church, viz.: death, which is not at his option; dismissal to another church of like faith, which is absurd in his case; and excommunication, which leaves a stigma upon him, an innocent man, in the eye of the community.

This is not an imaginary case; it is real. Such cases, and cases where persons came into the church in some excited drift of multitudes, but have no Christian experience, trouble pastors and churches. They feel the injustice of excommunication. They feel that a church would be relieved, and is stronger, by the departure of such members. They feel that this rigid rule is a premium on hypocrisy? But what can be done?

To meet the difficulty some churches grant letters, with great care not to

know whether they are used. Some provide by rule that membership terminates the moment the letter is voted, and it may be addressed "to any church" to which the person may (or may not) present this letter. Some drop the names of members for absence, without other action. Some have made two kinds of excommunication, the greater and the less, reserving the latter for cases which do not deserve any. And some writers make a distinction between excommunication and "withdrawal of fellowship." That is, there must be some relief.

Now, I venture to suggest, why may not a church, after kind and patient, but useless, effort to convince, vote that the member in question does, at his own request and for the specified reasons, by consent of the church, cease to be a member? "This, indeed, has been done by some churches in the last twenty years, and without any injury. Where is the rule which forbids?" It is in the Cambridge Platform, which says, "A church cannot make a member no member except by excommunication." But that Platform also declares that no act of the church is valid without the approval of the elders; and that no member can speak in a business meeting without their consent, and one must stop speaking when the elders order him to stop. We have learned some things since 1648, and our Platform of 1865 omits the rule in question.

There is, however, a conscientious feeling which is commonly expressed thus: "Will you release a man from his covenant with God?" No. This question does not refer to his covenant with God, but to his agreement with a particular, local church, to be a member of that church. His covenant with God necessarily antedated his *local* church membership, else the church could not have voted to admit him, and it existed whether he was a member of one local church or another local church, or was like that man of Ethiopia who "went on his way rejoicing" after Philip had baptized him.

It will be seen that this proposal does not suggest that a member may leave without the consent of the church. Nor does it justify the dishonorable course of persons who join another church without even preliminary notice to their own. It is limited to a conscientious request, apparently in good faith, without moral wrong, based on circumstances, which clearly unfit one to be a member; and only to be granted after prayer and effort to remove its need. In such a case what would be the harm of action something like this:—

Whereas, A. B., a member of this church, has made it seem clear that he is not in agreement with the faith [or purpose] of this church, and has, therefore, requested that he may be released from membership;

Voted, That the church, while it can in nowise release him from his covenant with God, does, for the reasons specified, consent that he be no longer under its watch and care, and directs that his name be dropped from its list.

Little Changes Which may be Noted.

March 27, 1890.

I REFER to changes in our Congregational ways, most of which are not very important, and some of which are doubtless only local. One of the most noticeable relates to Sunday afternoon. Not many years ago a regular Sunday afternoon service was universal. When I was a boy, in an old parish, partly city and partly country, the morning service in the summer was at ten o'clock, the afternoon at half-past two; in the winter half an hour later in the morning, and half an hour earlier in the afternoon. The second service, however, was as settled and as well attended as the first. Children were not allowed to stay at home on the plea that too much church-going would prevent their going in later years — an argument about equal to that of a father who did not let his young son go to school, on the ground that, if he did, the boy might not have anything to learn, or want to study, when he went to the academy. The afternoon service has been discontinued in many places. This allows time for parental instruction at home; likewise for driving out.

Some changes are visible in the parts and order of our public worship. People used to stand during the "long prayer," but now they remain sitting or bow their heads. In the last hymn in the afternoon all the people used to rise, turn their backs upon the pulpit, and steadfastly gaze upon the performing choir. This irreverence has now ceased, perhaps somewhat because the organ is now often found at the other end of the church, and frequently absurdly placed directly behind the minister. The pew doors rattle less during the benediction, because there are fewer pew doors; nor do men dive for their hats as they once did; nor do the men now go out in a body into the vestibule and wait for the women, as was once the inflexible law. I have sometimes thought that the customs of our old church had been largely shaped by Indian warfare; for its edifice had once stood inside of a fortification where the muskets were stacked and sentinels watched, and the men went out first to take their firelocks and look for prowling Indians. Many a custom lasts after its reasons have ceased to be.

A friend of mine once suggested that there were but two denominations where the people took a visible share in public worship; one being the Episcopal where the people did much talking, and the other the Quaker where all united in doing no talking. So set were our former ways that I recall the somewhat severe criticism made by good old Dr. Adams on another city minister for transposing a hymn and prayer, which transposition he said led to confusion in the churches. Nowadays it is wise for a minister exchanging to go early and study the programme faithfully before undertaking to follow its outlines. Pardon me if I suggest that, if I were to add anything more to our Congregational forms of service, I should not invent new parts, nor manufacture contrivances, but should select what I needed, either of prayers or address, from that ancient liturgy of our mother Church whose fitness has stood the test of ages. If, indeed, every Protestant should find in every Protestant church which he might happen to attend the Lord's Prayer, the Gloria Patri,

Little Changes which may be Noted.

and the Apostles' Creed, it would be the greatest step toward visible unity that has yet been taken.

The invitation to the Lord's Supper has been greatly modified in localities, but not universally. There was once none but the single formula, "All members of sister Evangelical churches in good and regular standing are invited," etc. Now, some invite "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ," or "all disciples of the Lord." Some say "all Christians are welcomed at their Lord's table." The underlying cause is really in a difference of theory as to whether the rite belongs to a local church as such, or to the church universal, visible or invisible; and whether it is really a memorial on the old abstract Congregational theory, or a channel of divine grace, or a union of both. Another very slight change is the omission, quite extensive, of the unkind reflection on the faithfulness of the deacons, embodied in the useless notice, "If any brother has been omitted," etc., "he will signify by rising." I never knew but one person to rise, and it was plain that he had omitted himself on purpose.

A more important change is the modification of the terms of admission to church membership, now under discussion, but not yet very extensively made. It is too much for this article. I will say, however, that having a treatise on systematic theology adopted by the church, while having nobody assent to it in coming in, reminds me of a great and stately gateway in Virginia, from which was an avenue up to a noble mansion taken by a general for his headquarters. A sentinel paced backward and forward at the gate, and no one could pass through unless he could give his reasons. But, inasmuch as the fence on either side for a long distance had been used up for firewood, anybody could go around the gate and up to the house at pleasure, and leave the sentinel in his dignity.

I notice one more change. Fast day is a thing of the past. Congregations do not gather, or are scanty if they do. It is an artificial institution, with no special application to the first week in April. Its present use is to open the base-ball season. Thanksgiving Day holds on as a family festival, but its religious observance is nearly ended. Ministers select it as the proper occasion on which to preach politics, but a purely religious Thanksgiving Day service will rarely draw a tenth of a congregation. On the other hand, Christmas and Easter, both abhorred by the fathers, are very extensively observed. They represent something. The methods of their observance also, which clothe our churches in appropriate evergreen or lilies, and fill them with song, meet a longing in our natures, not inconsistent with the Puritan strength which, for the time, threw these helps away.

On the whole, a careful student will find, I think, that many modifications have come, not by argument or plan, but from the unconscious influence of other Christian denominations. They are little signs of the drift toward Christian unity. The old repulsions, which resulted from fierce controversies, have largely lost their force. The drift is toward the simple catholic faith, in which the whole Christian Church substantially unites, without provincial excrescences; and our forms of worship and methods of work need no rule but that they minister to edification.

"Don't Let the Time be Wasted, Brethren!"

YEARS ago one of our congregation, a man in middle life, for whose conversion his wife had made daily prayer for thirteen years, stood up in our crowded prayer meeting and humbly avowed himself to be henceforth a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Tears of pleasure came from many eyes. Meeting him the next day, after a brief and cordial congratulation, I expressed the hope that he would help with his testimony at the next meeting. "Oh, no," he said eagerly, "I cannot do it. Don't call on me. You know I am no speaker." And he began to give reasons. He was a business man, though now retired, brought up in a different faith. I said to him, "I never call out anybody in meeting, and this is a matter of duty which you must argue with the Lord Jesus Christ and not with me." He told the incident at the next meeting, and said he could have argued the matter with me and satisfied himself, but he could not argue it with the Lord Jesus.

Was I right? I think so. Should such a method be universal? I do not say so. I grow shy of generalizing from single experiences. But I have found success in years of practice of making the church understand that I should leave each one to speak or pray according to his own sense of duty or of privilege, and without being called upon. Rarely have I deviated from this rule, and in my present church not in a single instance.

A noble man, years ago, moved into our neighborhood, and came to our next prayer meeting. I knew him, and greeted him before the meeting, cordially inviting him also to give us a word of fellowship that evening. "Oh, don't call on me," he begged in an almost piteous tone. I relieved his fear by my usual reply. At the next following meeting, unasked, he led us in tender prayer. After its close he told me how few times he had taken such part in prayer meeting in his former home; and later he told me, laughingly, how, in dread of the minister's eye, he used to try to shrink himself behind one of the eight-inch iron pillars in the prayer meeting room. This bit of exaggeration showed his dread, and he used to thank me for letting him alone, which, he said, was his only chance. He developed into remarkable influence and power, and held very prominent positions in our denominational work before he was called home. Eight-inch pillars are not a means of grace.

But will not painful pauses sometimes occur under this system? Sometimes, but I have not met a bad one for some years. A little care can do much to avoid them. If one occurs, do not in desperation take to the subterfuge of a hymn, which is not to praise God. Do not say in mournful sadness: "Don't let the time be wasted, brethren!" That sentence is enough to send a cold shiver through one's whole frame. What worse waste is there than to pump up remarks to fill up the time? When in youth I was an enthusiastic member of a fire-engine company (Hunneman make). We could put four lengths of suction hose together and into a cistern, and "down brakes" in wonderfully quick time, and the powerful machine was sure to draw, but, if the water was low, sometimes drew mud. Nor is it much of a relief to call on a reluctant

brother to dump something into the gap. It is said of one town in New England, which has little soil and very poor gravel, that the only reason why the Lord made that town, and threw in that gravel, was that there should not be a hole in the ground. In my first year at New Bedford I closed an awful pause with the benediction. The meeting had lasted just twenty minutes, and that church of the richest spiritual material never let the thing happen again. There is no inspired length for a meeting.

Will not the free system allow women to "take part"? It would be just as sensible to ask if it allows men to "take part." Paul tells the Galatians that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; and he lays down (I Cor. 11: 4, 5) a condition. Men who pray or prophesy must do it with their heads uncovered, while women, in praying or prophesying, must *not* have their heads uncovered. I am quite sure we follow these directions in our meetings, although perhaps I have not been careful enough to notice the second part of the rule.

Will not some people take too much time? Yes, under any system. The most effectual way of relief that I know was tried in a First Day School Convention of Friends (which, being interpreted, means Sunday School Convention) in Philadelphia once. A prominent and wealthy man was wearying the great gathering by a long and ill-judged address. The presiding officer, whom I well knew, at last interrupted him, and said, "Friend ——, probably Friends would be glad to have thee continue to speak if thee would speak to edification." The result was instantaneous. I am afraid that we cannot adopt this method.

The plan here proposed will succeed if rigidly adhered to, and if a church is trained up in it. It will develop the sense of responsibility. It will bring out varied talents. It will largely stop perfunctory talk. It will take away the dread which afflicts many sensitive Christians. It leaves the fitness of time for word or prayer to the believer himself, and not to a minister utterly ignorant in the matter. It trusts the Holy Spirit, while not removing, but intensifying, the need of prior thought and spiritual preparation. But this method, and every other, succeeds only according to the earnestness and devotion of Christians, and faithfulness in working to this end. In a former church of mine there was always present in prayer meeting a beloved father who was so hard of hearing that I doubt if he would have heard the distinct report of a shotted ten-pound Parrott fired twenty feet away. Persons would hand him the open hymn book, and point out the hymn; and he would watch with happy face those who rose to speak or pray. I asked him once (in writing), "Father ——, why do you come to prayer meeting, when you can't hear a word?" "Because," he answered, "it is a happy place to be in." His very presence was both prayer and prophecy.

Infelicities.

I THINK I once heard it said that history is philosophy teaching by example. If that sentence be correct, then a history will give the philosophy of the term "infelicities" as I may use it. I heard a minister once give out the hymn, "When Thou my righteous Judge shall come," reading two lines, and then hastily saying "omit the second stanza." Alas for his carelessness! The first stanza closed thus :—

> "Shall such a worthless worm as I,
> Who sometimes am afraid to die,
> Be found at Thy right hand?"

Omitting the second stanza brought immediately the first line of the third,

> "O Lord, prevent it by Thy grace."

It was an infelicity. It suggests the need of care on the part of leaders of meetings. It is hard enough to be correct, with all our watchfulness, when some hymns themselves are troublesome. Thus, that excellent hymn, "A charge to keep I have," perplexes one by closing with the words,

> "Assured, if I my trust betray,
> I shall forever die,"

when it began with the statement that the soul is "a never-dying soul." But these are infelicities which due care will guard against.

One is the selection of hymns for public worship without regard to the sermon or other parts of the service. I do not like to have the sermon put into the hymns or the prayers, but there ought to be a harmony in the service. Hymns are not to preach, but for praise, and yet their character should not be out of the day's current. The selection of the hymns is a matter needing thoughtful attention. How much the impression of a good sermon may be injured by an ill-fitting hymn, or especially that of a solemn address to the conscience by a Fourth of July triumphal march on the organ! Pardon me if I give a hint. For years past I have made it a rule to have, not only the topic and the Scripture selection ready before going to a prayer meeting in my charge, but also a list, on paper, of eight or ten hymns suitable for the occasion, writing out on paper the number and the first line. This does not mean that every one is to be used, or that some person may not suggest another. But it gives me a suitable list, so that I do not need to fumble over the leaves of the hymn-book while some one is speaking or praying — which latter is a vicious practice frequently seen. A glance at my list is a great convenience, and I am sure of something suitable to the occasion. The leader who hurries to his meeting with no Scripture selected, no hymns in mind, is under great disadvantages. I have instructed my Christian Endeavor folks in the same habit as my own. The deeper need of spiritual preparation does not render these minor cares unimportant. As to public worship, particularly, the sense of unity in the whole, if it exists, will often be felt, when nobody actually perceives it or thinks about it. This the perfection of unity of impression. What impression

Infelicities.

do I want to make to-day? Then let there be nothing, however slight, to mar that object.

I had, however, some other kinds of infelicities in mind. Things do not always fit as we supposed they would. Quotations and illustrations and applications need discretion. Quotations, for instance. When the American Board was in session in Boston in 1860, as one of the committee of arrangements, it fell to me to arrange for an overflow meeting in Park Street Church. The leader whom I provided rather inspired the great congregation when he introduced a returned missionary — I think from Ceylon — with what he considered a very apt quotation: "I am happy to present to you Rev. Mr. ———, from that 'land where every prospect pleases and only man is vile'!" The presiding officer did not seem to understand the ripple of mirth which went through the house.

A particularly unfortunate illustration occurred in a Massachusetts Sunday school years ago — never mind the name or place. A peripatetic Sunday school talker visited the school and wished to address it — one of the bustling kind, who can talk glibly and thinks he says something. Consent was reluctantly given, and the speaker reminded the boys of their privileges and opportunities, and what they might become; and, growing more and more eloquent, finally reached his climax in what he evidently thought a neat compliment to the gentleman on the platform, "Boys, if you use your opportunities as you may, you may come to be where your superintendent is to-day!" Unfortunately, the boys knew that their real superintendent was then in prison charged with defrauding the Government in contracts! The allusion was an infelicity. In fact, also, superintendents generally dread travelling talkers who want to say a few words, and many superintendents are plucky enough not to consent. They cannot waste the time.

Occasions should be understood. There are proprieties to be observed. One is not at liberty always to utter his own views; his liberty is limited by the courtesies of the time. Within a few years, for instance, a G. A. R. Post was invited to attend a particular church to hear a sermon, as is usual. The minister took the occasion to preach upon the dangers which menaced the Republic. Among these dangers he dwelt with great severity upon the Roman Catholic Church. He was thoughtless. Down in front of him were twenty or thirty soldiers of that faith, men who had perilled their lives to save the Republic, and some of whom bore scars from the enemy's bullets. He was attacking the cherished faith of men invited to hear him. When he learned the facts afterwards, he was terribly chagrined, but it was too late. Those men will never come again. We cannot exercise too much care in considering the proprieties of an occasion.

Inaccuracies are worse. It is of little use to talk sea-talk to sailors, unless an old sailor does the talking; or war-talk to old soldiers, unless an old soldier does the speaking. I remember a sermon in Washington when the eloquent preacher described a sea-fight, and pictured the bloody decks impressively. "So great was the carnage," he said, "that they had to tear up the vessel's *sheets* to make bandages for the wounded!" A manuscript which I had to read for the Publishing Society referred to the beauty of "the evolutions of a

park of artillery"; what could just as well be said of the evolutions of a stack of muskets. A Christian agent who wanted to preach to my old regiment told them how he saw a man, the day before, *deployed* by General Williams to take care of his horses; and our men, at the third repetition of the word, concluded not to hear any more. Many years ago, in the Boston Ministers' Meeting, was one who reported his sermon, as they did then, and who had told the sailors at the Bethel (he preached on Hope) what they would do if caught in a gale in the middle of the Atlantic: "You would instantly let go the anchor!" Infelicities.

But did I never blunder this way? Yes, twice. And the third time I escaped, in telling how one vessel struck a steamer on which I was, by telling the hearers, after considerable hesitation: "It struck the steamer — it struck the steamer — *obliquely on the right flank.*" And I never tried again! On the whole, the simple gospel is good enough.

Going to Meeting.

Auburn, N. Y., 1891.

I GO to meeting now quite often. I hire a pew; rent paid quarterly in advance, which is an excellent system for the finances. To be a temporary pew proprietor seems quite novel. The time will of course come, in the progress of Christian civilization, when pew ownership in the house of God, permanent or annual, which the Lord allowed us on account of the hardness of our hearts, will have passed away. I have no right to my pew at the Sunday evening service, where all seats are free; and, if I go, I am expected to take some other place with an air of bland unconsciousness of No. 73. Fortunately, the nine hundred hymn-books are all owned by the church. I am thankful, also, that the sad scene of an annual auction is unknown here. It is bad enough to have the theatre idea — reserved seats, price according to location; but think of the outrage of an auction sale once a year, the auctioneer standing on the platform of the communion table! Doves were essential to the temple worship, but the choice of doves was not sold at auction in the temple, and our Master gave His opinion of the whole business with a whip of small cords.

It was natural that I should at first be worldly minded enough to look at surroundings. Our church building is a stately edifice of stone, noble in architecture, ample in size. It is on a corner lot, and has an elegant chapel connected. I like good architecture; I like the spacious aisles, meaning passage-ways; I like the lofty ceiling. The church is rather dark, from its narrow windows, its black walnut wood-work and its somewhat sombre ceiling and walls; and upon nearly every Sunday during the winter the groups of jets depending from the roof have had to be lighted. I like the superb organ. I am grateful that it does not insult me by usurping the place of honor in the church. The Roman Catholic placed in that part of the church the altar, because the sacrifice of the mass is its glory. The Protestant Church placed in that part of the church the pulpit, because the preaching of the Word of God is its glory. Some people have caught the idea of the concert saloon and placed the organ in that part of the church, overtopping the pulpit, — because

Going to Meeting.

— well, what is its glory? This change is significant of changed tastes as to the gospel itself. I have been once or twice in pulpits when it seemed to me that all which the choir needed, as they sat in front of the organ and behind the minister, was two end-men to complete the transition.

I ought to say that our church building has twelve hundred sittings by actual count, that it cost up into the last quarter of two hundred thousand dollars, and that it is paid for. On the whole I confess that I enjoy these surroundings. I have worshipped God on ship-board, in barns, in a ruined building broken by the storm of war, and under the forest trees; but I admit a pleasurable feeling in a house of beautiful architecture and complete convenience. Is fitness of proportion worse for the house of God than awkwardness and bad taste? Do perfect acoustics violate the laws of God? Is architectural beauty inconsistent with the beauty of holiness?

I enjoy the public worship, but I am surprised. The congregation is very large, the evening one being ordinarily no exception, and yet there is not a single novelty in the whole order of worship. I like the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed and the Gloria Patria and the responsive reading, but there is not a vestige of either. Barring the Doxology in opening, the service is as bare as that of an old-fashioned New England church without its choir. The evening congregation, which may be called promiscuous, is brought together without device of novelty. We have no quartette and no choir for separate music. There is a solo occasionally, and the organist is a man of great ability and, I may say, genius. It is a comfort to hear him.

There are no pauper pews in the house. Absolutely free pews, with moneys raised by weekly offerings, or otherwise, is a consistent principle; so also is the system wherein all pews pay rentals. Some years ago the pastor, with the warm co-operation of a powerful church, began to gather into the congregation families from the large class which has drifted away from church-going. The first step was to bring pew rentals down to the means of people without insulting them by the offer of pauper pews. Sixty pews pay only five dollars a year each, assessed value; twenty-four more ten dollars a year, and a still further section can be had for from twelve to fifteen dollars per year. This was the first step. It was felt that a man who could get a pew at a fixed moderate rental would be more likely to come than if asked to come on charity. The result has justified the plan, and a very large number of families are welcomed into the congregation. The heart of the people was with the heart of the minister. Here let me say that in the several boards of this church no plan is ever adopted or vote taken unless it be absolutely unanimous. How much mischief has been done in our Congregational churches by the statement that the majority must govern! I asked the pastor how he began to gain families. It was by taking the names of all children in the Sunday school whose parents did not attend any church, and he went direct to their homes. A mother who wishes her child to be in Sunday school is naturally easily induced to help that child by going to church, and so is a father who loves his child. Pew rents within the family limit and a kind welcome are effective aids. I think that in this church there is a great number of willing helpers. It is always a problem how to utilize the helpers.

Now, when I listen to the preaching, I hear the old-fashioned gospel presented with power. The minister is intensely in earnest, but I do not discover traces of new inventions of doctrine, or of any new panaceas for the healing of a sinful world. It is certainly what is called orthodox preaching, and, while tender and kind, it does not hide sad truths. I listen and I wonder whether anything is to be gained by abandoning this method. The preacher pleases me in the fact that he does not dissect a truth to death. I like in our meeting the reverend air of the people. The place seems like the house of God.

Now, I should do wrong if I failed from motives of delicacy to say that the first element of success here in the ingathering of families and persons and the conversion of souls is the intensity of conviction on the part of the minister, his singleness of devotion to one work, and his unwearying, hourly labor. One leading man said to me, "That man when in the street seems to think of nothing but the value of somebody's soul, and everybody loves him." Another condition of success is the co-operative body of Christians. Put the two together and get some practical ideas of work, and I am inclined to think we have about all the conditions which we can use in the great problem. But I enjoy going to meeting. Two of my family go with me, two more have been here and sat in our pew. When my service ends here, and I go back to old friends, I shall carry with me a treasury of happy remembrances of this Christian people.

The Majority Must Rule

No. This plausible sentence is an instance where the letter killeth. It proceeds upon a totally wrong understanding of the genius and spirit of a Christian church — for I am referring only to a church. When matters are to be settled on a numerical basis the power of Christian unity departs. When a majority and a minority, so called, are in any degree crystallized, an evil spirit has entered the church which it will be very difficult to cast out. Any one conversant with controversies laid before ecclesiastical councils will have recognized the sad use of the terms "the majority" and "the minority" affixed to two parties in the suffering church. Really, no persons should ever be called "the majority," the term should simply refer to an impersonal vote on a particular motion. To apply it to a body of persons means that divers people regularly vote together as partisans, and against certain other people who, perhaps, also vote together as partisans. The result is two hostile camps permanently entrenched inside the church walls. Not a few churches may even now find merely a sullen truce waiting for a new generation to outgrow it.

The phrase which I have quoted does, indeed, seem plausible. How will you decide questions? A formal vote may indeed be necessary, but that does not imply that "the majority must rule." Whom shall the majority rule? Naturally the minority, so called. But this is wrong. Even in the State a majority does not rule the minority; laws are made directly or indirectly by a major vote, which laws govern all alike. In a conflict of opinions there seems to be no better way

The Majority Must Rule.

than to decide by a count of persons, and it makes no difference how much ugly feeling is engendered. No one supposes the decision thus reached is necessarily wise or expedient; the method is simply a better one than despotism or anarchy for arriving at some decision when a decision must be had. A popular decision is not necessarily correct. The people by a vast majority voted to crucify Jesus. Numbers never settle principles. The Christian Church has seen this again and again. It is useless to try experiments of this kind. Majorities are badly uncertain. They shift with great rapidity, and sometimes the new majority may avenge itself. Far better is it to place no reliance on counting of votes or hunting for voters.

Fortunately, our churches seldom have any questions of principle to debate; these questions are settled. Churches have no power of legislation, and are therefore restricted to measures alone. When a church has such to consider, shall we not apply the majority theory? Never, if it can be avoided. The test of numbers is not the Christian test. The counting of votes and the attainment of a majority, when this idea is uppermost, degrades Christian discussion and dishonors Christian affection. "The majority must rule and we have a majority, and the minority ought to submit," such is a not infrequent remark. Observation recognizes that this is generally the spirit of tyranny, and there is no worse tyranny than that of a majority. It is totally opposed to Christian gentleness, mutual respect, and brotherly love.

What should be had in the church? Unity. How may this unity be attained? A writer gives us a method for a particular case where a unanimous vote, he thought, was demanded. His plan would have the reluctant minority talked with and instructed. If the instruction took effect the end would be accomplished; but if not, then in due time the church should suspend the persons thus unreasonably obstinate, and the way would then be clear for a unanimous vote. I do not know that this plan has ever been tried. Perhaps there is a better way.

My own conviction is that it is rarely best or right to press any matter in a church which does not commend itself, after due consideration, to the general sentiment of the whole body. Action is seldom absolutely necessary. More trouble comes from cases of discipline, I suppose, than from any other cause, and to press such a case, against the opinions or feelings of members of the church, is rarely necessary. I must admit that it is sometimes unavoidable; in general it is not. There are cases of division in the calling or retaining of a pastor. Here unanimity seems absolutely essential. Very recently a ballot by no means unanimous was made unanimous by a *vivâ voce* vote — as impossible a proceeding in point of order as it was unwise for future success.

What would you do? I would never have in a church the spirit which for a moment contemplates a majority vote. That there are churches which so lack the divine Spirit as to have become chronically inadequate, for the time, for any better method, is painfully true. The majority rule for the hardness of their hearts. But most churches can do better. There can be patience, forbearance, gentleness, and the absence of self-will. In fact, the less business which a church does the better. Measures seldom require haste.

I know two churches, one of which had a pastorate of eight years, and the

other of eleven, in which there was never a divided vote, although one of these was made up of very diverse elements. It was the custom of the pastor to bring every matter before the large standing committee for full discussion. If any member of that committee did not favor the measure, it was always postponed in a kind spirit, and in almost all cases unanimity resulted. The pastor held that if any member did not deem the proposal wise there must be something in his view worth considering. If the committee became unanimous, and only if it did, the subject was brought before the church. Of course, it came with great force, but if objection was found the discussion was gentle, and postponement was always given.

Alas, that such unanimity cannot always be had! But have patience, brethren. Do not attempt a majority government, and the government of the Spirit can generally be secured.

How to Get Rid of the Minister.

THERE are two parts to this subject. We will take the first part to-day, my suggestions being all drawn from cases in councils of which I have been a member, excepting those which I mention as occurring in my boyhood.

Coming away from church one Sunday, when I was a boy, in company with a young man who would now be called "an active Christian worker," I said, "That was a good sermon." My older friend replied, carelessly, "Yes, but his usefulness is about at an end." I was really shocked, for I liked the minister and I respected the pastoral office. Nor was there, I now see, any reason for that remark except the whims of a few changeable people who wanted high pressure all the time. The minister was thoroughly useful and successful, but a few remarks of the kind I have quoted succeeded in exciting an uneasy feeling which caused the sensitive man to resign. It was my first knowledge of the practice of getting rid of the minister.

Generally, it is not a hard thing to do. It has been well said that one alert and judicious hornet can break up a whole Methodist camp meeting. A similar alert and busy man or woman can usually end a pastorate as easily. Once determined upon, the only question is that of method. Perseverance in the selected method may expect success. It is not necessary that a dissatisfied parishioner should attack the pastor on the real point of difference, where the pastor may be clearly in the right. The wise malcontent is too shrewd for that. A keen, practical politician once gave me a good idea. It was when a public man had made a constituent angry by refusing an unreasonable request. My political friend said, "He [the constituent] will make Mr. A. suffer for that." "But," said I, "he cannot hurt Mr. A., for Mr. A. is plainly right." My politician smiled at my innocence, saying, "O, he will not touch Mr. A. there; he 'll drop that and take him in some weak spot somewhere else." There is no minister who is perfect in his work or who can satisfy everybody, and the bright opponent knows what to do. In our churches there is generally an active spirit which may be made useful or may be treated as a restlessness to

How to Get Rid of the Minister.

be crystallized into a demand for change in the pastorate. Our pastorates require for success mutual confidence and affection. When these are seriously impaired the end is at hand.

If the minister is not technical in his theology it is a good plan to suggest quiet fears that he is not sound in doctrine. This suggestion must be made, however, only to properly selected parties. Judiciously worked it is quite successful. It is not necessary that the charge be true, or even that it be anything more than a query with a solemn shake of the head. Christian people are properly watchful of doctrine. The exact opposite of this course may well be tried if the minister is not sensational, again selecting the right class of listeners. Tell them sadly how unfortunate it is that the minister's doctrine is so narrow, so bigoted, so antiquated, indeed so inconsistent with the liberal views of the present day. "If we had a minister of advanced thought and progressive ideas, how we should flourish!" Again, it is not necessary that the charge be true. The slightest coloring is sufficient. The only immediate object in either case is to excite restlessness. The leaven will then work.

It will be all the easier if the minister really prefers the methods which have stood the test of years. He may believe that the old-fashioned gospel is the power of God. He may not incline to brass bands behind the pulpit or theatrical performances in the chapel. These oddities of his may indeed make it a little difficult to compete with churches whose attractions are of this modern order. Herein is a plain reason for separation, and it may be boldly asserted that the minister is opposed to all progress.

Of course, the restless man may complain of the minister's age, if the minister has reached the period when his experience, sagacity, and loving kindness would make him the most valuable man as preacher, pastor, and adviser that the church could have — that is, if the church desires its own edification and godly work. The charge that the pastor is fifty years old is one that cannot be refuted. Sixty years old is worse than the dead line at Andersonville. The sacred affections which have been made firm by years of loving union will find it hard to withstand a skilful demand for a young minister. If you can add that he does not interest the young people, whether true or false, you may generally write out his resignation. But this method may not be infallible. Sometimes the pastor has been so closely identified with the personal experiences, family joys and sorrows, and real life of his people that the argument does not work. Sometimes, also, the young people themselves, and even the children, look to their old minister with a really filial respect and affection. It is best, therefore, to be wary.

A good way, when there is nothing to say, is to cut down the subscriptions, to be taken as evidence of dissatisfaction. Any pretext will suffice. I knew an instance in my later boyhood where a man, or perhaps it was his wife, inherited an estate worth from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars, and the man, who was in good circumstances, cut down his subscriptions for the alleged reason that the new property required quite an expenditure for improvements. He was a leading man, and others followed with equally sound reasons until it became necessary for the parish officials to inform the minister that his salary

could not be secured. No cause was given, but he felt it necessary to resign. This is an excellent method, because it requires nobody to give reasons why a change is desirable.

It is easy to allege a pastor's want of success when the real trouble lies in the conduct of the people. All that is necessary is to secure such conduct. I remember a council twenty years ago where the fault of one was attributed to the other in a comical manner. The committee opposed to the pastor (who, by the way, was a godly and successful man) made one of their allegations against him to lie in the neglect of a portion of the church, meaning those dissatisfied with the pastor, to attend the Sunday night prayer meetings, and was about to call witnesses to such neglect. I suggested that it did not seem necessary for these brethren to take up our time in proving an offence on their part which they frankly confessed. "Confessed?" Yes, these brethren, I said, had honorably confessed their own shortcomings in neglecting the prayer meeting, and I thought we might pass on. We did so, but that committee appeared to be bewilderingly thinking how an allegation against the pastor proved to be a confession of their own sin.

In one of the first councils I ever attended it was brought to view that two members of the church, a man and a woman, had from the first determined and avowed that the minister should not remain. They had never even heard him preach after his settlement, but they set themselves to work with such energy, although without reason, that they made the otherwise unanimous people feel that no peace could be expected. A very short pastorate was the result. When the committee reported the usual resolution that "we deeply sympathize with this beloved church in its loss," I was reckless enough to move a substitute to the effect that the church had clearly failed of its duty in not suppressing these two factious persons by proper discipline. The council was astonished. A venerable minister thought to dispose of my amendment with a wave of his hand. So many of the younger brethren, however, sustained my proposal that it became necessary to recommit the result, which was finally changed to a mild expression of regret that the church had yielded to the unreasonable conduct of two of its members. I was young then and knew no better.

It is not necessary to quote other methods. Our churches are rarely strong enough to stand the strain of even a small opposition to a pastorate. It takes all the united effort of each to secure the financial means requisite to support its institutions, and its unity is necessary to spiritual good. Hence the best and wisest persons in the church and congregation are forced to make sacrifices of personal feeling for the sake of harmony. This is the leverage of a discontented man offended by something the minister has done or has not done, or offended because the minister is liked by somebody whom himself does not like. He must be careful, however, to have it understood that his opposition is purely out of love for the glory of God.

But there is another part to this subject. It is the delicate question what is to be done when there is manifestly a misfit in the relations of pastor and people, or when, from whatever cause, the object of a pastorate fails to be accomplished. This side requires another paper.

Shall We Get Rid of the Minister?

I WAS to discuss what should be done when a pastorate is clearly a failure, but I must postpone that discussion because of suggestions that the former paper needed further development. The readers of the *Congregationalist* would be surprised if they knew how many sore-hearted men have been suffering from the breaking up of their useful work by needless and unjust fickleness, or how many parishioners have been wounded by the sundering of ties most dear and profitable to them, made necessary only by the causeless discontent of a few factious people. Words from such persons, ministers and others, have come to me in confidence, as they have come upon other subjects upon which I have written.

The pastoral tie cannot be broken ruthlessly without leaving a permanently sad spot in a minister's heart. If he feels that he has tried to do his duty and has been reasonably successful in his work he keenly feels injustice. Nor is it a light thing to him that affectionate spiritual relations and bonds of friendship should be sundered. The true minister has a sensitive nature. He will not be effective without it. He has given his heart to his work. There is no money in it, no pride of place, but a tolerable certainty of being superseded in middle life and a fair expectation of poverty in old age. His success in such a work depends largely upon cordial sympathy between himself and his people. When fault-finding and alienation come to be manifested, however slight they may be, his elasticity begins to weaken. If the misfortune progresses till an otherwise needless separation occurs it is a question whether he will ever get rid of the heartache. If he settles again he is likely never again to be the same man. He cannot have the old buoyant enthusiasm. He can scarcely help being distrustful. Such are many histories. In frequent cases he does not settle again. I have learned, as the result of my last paper, of such cases, where able and good men could never bring themselves to try a second pastorate. One experience of factiousness completely dispirited them.

On the other hand, the forcible removal of a loved pastor has permanently hurt many a heart and many a family. They had been blessed by his ministrations. His preaching of the Word had brought food to their souls. They had gone to him for advice and found him wise in counsel. They had heard his voice in gentle, Christian assurance by the bedside of their dying, and felt his sympathy in the tenderness of funeral service. "No other pastor could be like him," says one, "for no other can know our dead ones who have gone." But some strangers came in who wanted a different style of preacher, or some machine method of operation, or some permanently factious people began their usual course. The end was sure to come, if for no other reason than that the minister was unnerved. The many who were profiting by his work have met with a loss which no other man can make up. The real Christian power of the church is in some directions weakened by every needless change. It takes time for roots to strike out into the earth.

Such are some of the results of getting rid of the minister in many cases. So people tell me.

No church expects perfection in its minister. He is not a perfect preacher;

he is not a perfect pastor. What in him will suit some will not suit others. People must expect this. No other man will be perfect if one takes the place. Hence, critical fault-findings are ungenerous. They are often most injurious. I have been told of one boy, just coming toward manhood, who, interested through the minister's work, appeared certain to become a professed disciple of the Lord, but whose spiritual impressions were all destroyed by his father's captious criticisms of the minister, and the then young man has never shown sign of Christian feeling since. Years ago, in giving an address to the people at an installation, I told them that in hurting the minister's influence by fault-finding, they were simply destroying his power for good to them and to their children. An influential listener came to me at the close of the service, and said with emotion that he wished he had heard that twenty years before, for he would then have been a different man. But he proved himself a different man from that time, and became a most faithful, though not reasonless, helper to his pastor in all Christian work. Some children get most of their impressions of the gospel from their parents' criticisms, and under such circumstances no spiritual influence is possible.

There are congregations, or rather churches, which have a confirmed reputation for sacrificing ministers. Such churches are well known. A sanguine man accepts a call, thinking that perhaps he will be able to prevent a repetition of the usual history. A few years' experience shows him his error. Fickleness begins, as usual, to do its work and he departs a wiser man. It is somewhat remarkable that not a few such churches are those which have had ingrained into them a disputatious, and conscientiously contentious scheme of theology, which has made hair splitting a substitute for Scriptural gospel. There is a harmony of evil as well as of good in the earthly kingdom of God.

I suppose it is an open secret that in a church, here and there, may be found some despot who decides who the minister shall be, and when the pastor must leave. Some churches are habitually known by the name of such a ruler. It is Mr. So-and-so's church. When the ruler decides that a change must be made, it is easy to set the machinery in motion. I do not know that there is any help for it. The people can only hope that the ruler's power may be used mercifully and wisely. The minister who goes to such a church should go intelligently. As I write frankly, I will say that in the only two installed pastorates which I have had there was no despot, but the leading man in each was a real saint of the living God. No pastor could ever have had more kind and faithful friends, critics, and helpers. Both of them were honored in death, and have gone to a blessed reward. A few readers will remember, I think, an important council, where a church was sadly divided, but where one of the lay brethren of the church actually brought tears to the eyes of some of the council by the tender and tearful earnestness of a sudden sentence: "Brethren, I am always a pastor's man."

Some dry statistics may have a bearing upon this subject. Nearly thirty per cent of all our Congregational churches in the United States are, on the average, always without pastors. Undoubtedly, quite a number of these are too weak ever to have a pastor. But the great majority of the vacant churches are in the process of changing from one pastoral service to another. That is, the process of change takes one quarter of the time of all our churches, if averaged.

Shall We Get Rid of the Minister?

The loss of practical work is thus seen to be enormous, and it is due in a very large degree to mere capriciousness, and in that connection to the getting rid of the minister. Much of this vacant time is worse than vacant. It is spent in the hearing of successive candidates, not for purposes of spiritual good, or of the worship of God, but of judging of the cut of a man's hair, or the way in which he stands, or of the fitness of his coat, or, if critics rise so high, of the flowery character of his language, or the eloquence of his prayers — while sober Christians mourn. Is this necessary to so great an extent? Cannot churches be reasonably contented with good pastors? Is the mere desire for change, or love of novelty, or lack of interest, a sufficient reason for weakening our forces in the ministry, or materially lessening the influence and power of our churches?

Indeed, if there should seem to be some lack of success in a pastorate, would it not be well, before looking to a separation which must always be productive of some evil, for the church to meditate upon its own interior life, consider whether it is holding up the hands of its pastor, see whether it is faithful in its own Christian work, think whether it bears its pastor toward the throne of God in its own daily prayers? Would it not be well for the church to humble itself before God and obtain the complete indwelling of the Holy Spirit that it may be in a condition to know where the want of success lies, and, if that want be not already taken away, be in a condition and spirit qualifying it to discuss with its pastor the difficulties of the case and how they may be remedied? Perhaps he needs only this new atmosphere to fill him with new life and power. Perhaps through this the people's children shall be converted, the believing be edified, and the faces of the aged be glorified.

Ready to Depart on the Morrow.

BUT is not a separation between pastor and people sometimes needful? Yes. "Pastors and teachers" are given "for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." When this object is not accomplished and is not likely to be, it is time for separation. Permanence in the pastoral office is not to be magnified. Life-long pastorates used to exist, not from spiritual considerations but because the minister could not be dispossessed of the parsonage lands where he raised his corn and cut his hay. The correct principle now is that the relation should continue so long as it secures good results, and no longer. A minister who remains in office when he knows that his people, or a large portion of them, would be relieved in heart and soul by his departure is sadly callous to the dignity of his calling. The ministry was created for the church, and not the church for the ministry.

The general practice of ministers has annihilated the idea that the pastoral contract may not be broken, broken by the wish of one party and against the wish of the other. An estimable lady has repeatedly urged me to write an article on the wickedness of stealing ministers. She was one of a tearful

people whose beloved pastor had been called away to a larger church. He did not regard the contract as sacred. Suppose that by and by his new people conclude that he is not the man for them, has he any right to complain if they tell him so? Ministers have themselves brought about, in a large degree, the lack of respect for permanent pastoral relations. They have acted upon the theory that they ought to go where they can do more good; the people sometimes, also, entertain the feeling that a minister would better give way to one who can do more good for them.

It is not a necessary disparagement of a minister that a separation is desirable for the people's sake. I am getting upon delicate ground, but it is inevitable to do so. A man may be particularly fitted for some one kind of work, which will be accomplished at a certain stage of progress. Doubtless many home missionaries are admirably fitted for founding churches in destitute places and nurturing them for a moderate period, while they know that an old-fashioned settled pastorate is not their strength. A minister may also, in the older parts of the country, do good service in the founding and early life of a church who has wisdom enough to see when his special work is at that point where some other can well take it up. Sometimes in a successful pastorate a minister may have affected that portion of the people which, perhaps by some mental characteristic, is particularly susceptible to his influence, and a different kind of a man may reach the other class. Cross-plowing may be needed. One man's method of thought and preaching may be one-sided; that of another man is needed for the rounded development of Christians. The minister who can see when such critical times come is a wise man. It is no disparagement of that minister for himself or others to believe that he can do more good in a new place and that some other may do more good in his old place. If at such a time the minister goes away he takes with him, and forever keeps, a great wealth of respect and affection.

Nor is it an unknown case that a minister is wrongly placed from the very beginning of his pastorate. Perhaps it was in haste, perhaps from misunderstanding, but a mistake was made. It does not follow that he is a poor preacher or a bad pastor. It is simply that he is not where he ought to be. He might make a capital professor of Greek or of church history. His whole method of preaching might be of exceeding value to a different class of mind. The position of things is unfortunate, although neither he nor the people is blamable for it. Success always demands a peculiar kind of power to touch minds and hearts. The man who does not have this power in one place may have it in another. It depends as much upon the characteristics of the people as it does upon his own. He may be unable to preach anything but law where hearts have become hardened, or love where hearts have become flabby with sentiment. It is not to his discredit that he does not see the results he desires, for he cannot change without throwing away his personal strength. John the Baptist would have been utterly useless in Patmos, and John the Evangelist equally useless at Engedi. It is possible, besides, that a man may grieve his people by preaching something which is not gospel truth and to which no church has a right to consent. It is also possible that a pastor's administration of affairs may be overbearing, reckless, or tactless.

What should, then, be done? The question is seldom needed. Ministers are

Ready to Depart on the Morrow.

only too ready to see the lack and to imagine more of it than exists. Ministers are sensitive. Failing to see the results they desire, their tendency is only too great to seek some other place for work. I recall an interview with one very brilliant young man, of whom few would have imagined that tears came to his eyes on account of the fewness of conversions, and who seriously questioned whether he ought not to leave the place where he was admired. There was another, a friend of mine, a most earnest and spiritual Christian, but one who easily became despondent, who hastily promised to go to a distant church. He thought that his people were indifferent to him and his work when they were merely not demonstrative. When the people found that he was intending to go away they showed that there was not a child in the parish nor a saint in a home who did not love him. But it was too late. He must sadly keep his word. He went to a quarrelsome church, endured a few years of torture, and then happily escaped to a Christian people. It is my belief that there are many hasty removals. The mere suggestion, by a single person, that the church needs a change would end many a pastorate. The danger is not that ministers insist upon remaining when they ought to leave, it is that of unnecessary discouragement. A few cases of stubbornness may become known and seem to be many; the many of the opposite kind are unknown.

But suppose that the minister does not have the wisdom to withdraw when it is plainly needful. What then? He may see dissatisfaction so great as to make his continuance practically useless, but he persists in holding his position. He may say that the dissatisfaction is unreasonable, that it is unjust, that it is from no fault of his. Let it be so, and still it is difficult to see how a man who has given himself to the work of the ministry can persist in useless service. There is not a pulpit in the land worth an hour's contest to hold. Our Master told His disciples if people would not hear in one city to go to another. "They have not treated me right," said a minister, who was asking my advice years ago but who refused to resign. "The people did not treat the Master right," I replied, "and is the disciple greater than his Lord? You have the law on your side, but you cannot afford to waste your time fighting that congregation. The world is wide enough to preach the gospel in." He would not take this advice and he suffered long for his mistake.

If a pastor determines to maintain his legal rights in the face of his uselessness he can do it for a while. The absurd decisions of old courts are still quoted — relics of a time when anything but New Testament principles characterized the decisions. But it is a sad day for a church and sadder for the servant who was told by the Master to feed His sheep when the minister begins to count his "friends," and considers as personal enemies those who think a change is needful; and when majorities and minorities begin to be reckoned there are unhappy days in that church for Christians and taunting days in the community.

Some such cases as this have led many churches to put into the call to the pastorate a proviso that either party may terminate the connection by giving three months' notice. They have made many other churches determine never again to install a pastor.

There seems to be no reason why, if pastors are free to resign when they

please, churches should not have the equal right to propose a separation if the circumstances seem to demand it. But this would often be needlessly unkind. What can be done when there is no hope of usefulness? If it is harsh for the church to take formal action, shall the church committee tell the pastor of the apparent need? But that committee was not chosen for this purpose. Shall those who desire a change append their signatures to this opinion? But this is quite sure to divide the church. Shall some spiritual Christians volunteer their advice to the pastor? But this seems to be presuming. "What, then, can be done, if every way is bad," said a perplexed layman to me, as I once gave him these answers —a layman whose beloved name used to be upon this *Congregationalist.* To reduce the salary is sometimes tried, but it cannot be legally made lower than that of the original contract.

Yet if office-bearers of a tender spirit, men whom the pastor respects, should kindly suggest to him merely to consider what may be best for both parties, and leave to him to decide, there is not one pastor in a hundred who would not honor their frankness and make careful examination, and who would not be ready to sacrifice his own position, his own comfort, his own benefit, for even the least apparent good of a beloved church. I am speaking of true ministers of Jesus Christ.

Impracticable.

Some years ago a member of a ministerial association read a paper upon some practical difficulties in pastoral work. Each member was called upon in turn for opinions, and one brother made some rather bold statement of what ought to be done in a particular case mentioned. Another brother in turn commented upon this statement with the remark, "We all know that Brother —— always takes the bull by the horns." By and by, good and wise Father Cobb said: "Brother C. says that Brother —— always takes the bull by the horns. That is so, but I have watched Brother —— pretty closely, and I find that he always first calculates the size of the bull!" "Brother Cobb," answered Brother ——, "you are the first man that has found me out." I think that perhaps Brother —— showed some sense in a reply to some person who urged him to remodel the music in his church: "It is as much as I can do to manage my end of the meeting house without undertaking to manage the other end." This suggests two things: first, that organists and choirs are very dangerous articles for ministers to meddle with; and, secondly, that that church had not been guilty of turning itself into a concert saloon by irreligiously putting the organ in the rear of the pulpit.

There are many things to be desired which cannot be had. There are many good things which it is not worth while to try to attain. There are also different methods of endeavoring to secure good results. I remember a worthy pastor who wished to accomplish what seemed to be desirable changes, and he went to work by direct attack. He could safely have left the matter to his church officers, or, if they would not undertake it, let it alone. It concerned the church much more than it did him. When he found it expedient to resign

Impracticable.

his pastorate, in answer to a question as to the reason, some one suggested a reminiscence of good old Father H. of Norfolk County, who, wanting to cut off a large limb of a tree, placed his ladder against the limb, and, mounting it, did the sawing between the ladder and the tree, whereby he fell and broke his leg.

But I have in mind impracticable or useless attempts in certain directions, one of which is connected with advice as to the best style of preaching. An honored preacher, who is himself a most effective orator, recently gave an address upon preaching. It was a brilliant address, but it necessarily had to do with minor, although important, particulars. The secret of his own success was above those particulars. Obedience to his suggestions would be useful, but the fact is that he is inimitable and that the rest of us cannot do what he can. The spiritual elevation of his thought, always sustained from beginning to end, is itself something which defies all rules and all methods. It lifts him out of the usual ways in which even excellent preachers travel. It sets him above the best and most accurate rules, because such rules are not applicable to the region of his thought. When you add intellectual delicacy fitting that elevation, and the diction which gives expression, you will see that advice how to attain this power is advice to the impracticable. Principles apply, but rules do not, and principles presuppose peculiar powers. It is not worth while to worry because one cannot do his work after the manner of the one to whom I refer. He may comfort himself with the thought that that peculiar power has its own limitations and incompleteness, and that things thus unsupplied, and persons whose wants are not thus met, furnish a province for other minds of a different order.

I knew a man whose manner was always suggestive of Richard S. Storrs. I think he must, at some time, have come under the influence of that great orator's preaching. Whether he consciously imitated the tone and manner of one whom he admired, or merely imbibed something of it, I cannot tell. But the result was not satisfactory. It reminded just enough to show that the man was not the Brooklyn preacher. No rules, no directions, no advice can secure the success which the orator has attained. I speak of this just now because Dr. Storrs' later habit of unwritten speech has, doubtless, led many young men, or perhaps simply encouraged them, to adopt this style of preaching. Dr. Storrs might tell us that he thinks out his thoughts even into language, language which the thought necessitates, and perhaps that he simply reproduces the whole, not from memory (if I guess correctly), but because the original thought unrolls itself in public as it did first in his own mind. Now, it is to be remembered that to reach the same resulting power under direction and guidance is simply impracticable. It should also be remembered that Dr. Storrs did not adopt his present method until after many years of enriching study and close adherence to writing. One could be equally swept away by the marvellous speech which Dr. Behrends made upon the platform at Worcester, or rather the speech which made itself, and no one can give any hints or advice which would reproduce in another that peculiar power of speech.

I shall venture to refer to a preceding Richard S. Storrs, the one of Braintree. In my early years he was the patriarch, and almost the ruler, of our con-

ference. I used to hear him occasionally, usually at such gatherings. He was at his best in remarks connected with the administration of the Lord's Supper, where remarks are generally an impertinence. What richness of thought, what evangelical fervor, what almost inspiration of spiritual force, what torrent of burning words, and then what tearfulness of pathos used to characterize these occasions, those of us who heard him can never forget. One could not analyze, one could not imitate if he could analyze. He was himself. The son is himself. Each of a multitude of preachers doing faithful, godly, successful work is successful because under God he is himself. One can often get hints from the success of others, can find merits by analysis, can sometimes see the source of power, can be warned of deficiences in one's self; and therefore studying the work of successful men is of vast advantage. But to succeed by being somebody else is impracticable.

I had occasion, a few years ago, to give some hints and some criticisms to some young theological students. It was a delightful work. I almost regretted that I had in earlier life declined the offer of such a chair, except that I knew I had been right in my reason for declining, which was that I was not fit for it. But in the later episode I encountered a natural desire of young men to adopt the plans and methods of some successful minister or teacher. There was a drift in the direction of certain lectures on preaching given by some one who perhaps exemplified their teachings. I was obliged to say two things: first, "Prof. Alexander could not himself safely adopt this method of composition until after many years of study and practice"; and, secondly, "You will pardon me if I wait for evidence that any Alexanders are in this class until years shall have thrown their light upon the matter. What can be safely done in the ripeness of mature life may not be safely relied upon in earlier days."

This brings me to suggest that the increasing prevalence of preaching without manuscript has in it immense promise. But it also has grave dangers. For myself, I was forced into the new system by having to preach for years to soldiers in active service, in barracks, in roofless buildings, under the trees, under falling snowflakes without shelter, in the sound of distant guns. Life there disdained manuscripts. Early in the war I heard a chaplain in our division deliver a written sermon upon the existence of God as proved by the works of nature. Attendance was voluntary, and his audience was eventually reduced to three persons. He resigned. Soldiers believe in the existence of God.

But in the quiet of regular home work people are to be instructed. This requires study. Study must be accurate. Both styles are good. But just now I am sure I can do no better than to accept the old quotation from Cicero which my learned and often helpful friend in the Congregational House suggests may be useful to some young speakers: "If our Sulpicius here would practise writing, his public speech would be much more terse; at present his style (to speak as farmers do of grass) displays a sort of exuberant abundance, which should be pruned down by the *stylus*."

Make the Gospel Attractive.

SOME years ago a little girl, who may not like it if I put her name in print, was seated upon the knees of her grandmother one Sunday. The grandmother, one of the meek and Scripture-loving saints, was endeavoring to impress the child with the delightfulness of heaven. Soon the child interrupted the teaching with a question based upon her own likings, "Dranma, has Dod dot a titchen?" The spiritually-minded grandmother felt obliged to admit that heaven was probably destitute of that convenience. "Well," said the child, impatiently, having in mind her favorite amusement in the kitchen, "He 's dot a pump, has n't He?" The grandmother again had to admit a doubt. "Then I don't want to do [go]," said the child, decisively, as she sprang to the floor and refused to listen any further.

At present if "the men of grace have found glory begun below," God has a plentiful supply of kitchens. Our churches, or very many of them, appear to have found the kitchen an important aid in the work of the gospel. The social element, which enters so largely into the outward prosperity of the congregation, is greatly helped by a good table. The table — I refer to the secular supper table — is quite an inducement in making people at home in the church. I have heard it said that under this inducement some people attend only the sociable, so called. Some people, I am afraid, do not sympathize with the new development. In promoting the social life of the congregation there really seems to be no valid objection to such methods. If they are means to a higher end they are certainly admissible, if people like them. But I have heard of churches which think that social gatherings of the people can be had with success without a kitchen, and they insist that they are successful. But I think they must fail in obtaining the presence of such as our Lord described when He said that they had sought Him because they "did eat of the loaves and were filled."

There may be other methods of attracting people to the church. I remember a New Hampshire story about two competing stage lines, in which each alternately reduced its charge below that of the other until no charge at all was made, and then one of them achieved a signal victory by offering to carry any passenger for nothing and give him twenty-five cents in addition at the end of the route. Only one passenger, however, demanded the quarter of a dollar, and the agent told him that no other person had asked for it. The traveller replied that he should not be cheated out of his just dues and that he would continue to patronize the line unless the opposition should offer fifty cents. I commend this example to competing churches, or to churches not competing but desirous of bringing people to public worship. It may not be necessary to offer money. Good suppers, or brass bands of a high order, or interesting dramatic performances may answer.

It is well known that Sunday schools always handsomely increase in the number of pupils a few weeks before Christmas Day. Some heartless people have been cruel enough to make a rule that no boy or girl who has not been a member of the school for six months should receive a present from a Christmas tree. I have known cases where an enterprising boy attended three Sunday

schools each Lord's Day by judicious selection of a mission school in the morning, a church school at noon, and another at three o'clock. Three presents could thus be secured besides three picnics. It is a sad commentary on human heartlessness that one pastor insisted that a boy must abandon the other two schools if he was to be enrolled in that of the pastor and be eligible for a present.

But there are other methods of attractiveness. We have means far superior to those of the apostles, who had nothing but the gospel and their own intense convictions of the needs of a sinful world. They had no printing press in Corinth or Antioch or Jerusalem. Of course they had no daily paper issued Saturday evening in which to announce the services of the next forenoon. Of course, again, they could not put forth an attractive program. It is astonishing that Paul and Peter could gather audiences under such unfavorable circumstances and in competition with gladiators, circuses, and theatrical performances. To show what might have been done if Paul had had proper facilities I take the following from among the Sunday announcements in a recent Saturday paper, substituting names in italics, premising that the skilful advertiser was shrewd enough to get a special notice in another part of the paper in these words: "'Those desiring 'times of refreshing' will read notice of —— Church." It is indeed refreshing to read the notice to which we turn: —

Pilgrims' Church. Constellations of talent. Prof. *Tubal-Cain's* grand choir, Prof. *Saul's* fine orchestra, Prof. *David's* immense chorus; prayer meeting 9.30 A. M.; the pastor, Rev. *Matthew Mark*, Ph. D., D. D., will preach at 10.30 A. M. on "What Spring is Saying"; sacrament; Sunday school, 12.20 P. M.; grand chorus, led by big choir, contralto solo by Mrs. *Miriam*, violin solo by Prof. *Timbrel*, also sacred readings and other pleasing features. Come to the big Bible class led by *Timothy Jude*. Strangers welcome. Everybody invited. Y. P. S. C. E., 6 P. M.; grand sacred concert, 7 P. M.; preaching by the pastor, 7.30 P. M. on "The Cause and Cure of Our Present Fomentations."

The admirable variety here given is worthy of commendation. We should have liked a little more definiteness as to the "sacrament." Which one was to be administered? If baptism, by what method? If the Lord's Supper, what kind of wine was to be used? What the preacher made of "our present fomentations" must have been of great interest. I have understood that there is sometimes a rhetorical advantage in exciting the curiosity of hearers. The preacher evidently had this advantage. As it is now too late to hear his discourse, I turn to a dictionary for light, and obtain this definition of "fomentation": "The act of applying warm or medicated liquors to any part of the body." A secondary meaning is that of the thing thus applied. I am still, therefore, sadly in the dark. No doubt there was a spiritual application.

A second inspiring advertisement from the same source has the preliminary notice, away from the advertisement itself, as follows: "Please take no notice of *Pilgrims'* Church announcement if you want a poor and stupid time." The advertisement itself read thus: —

PILGRIMS' CHURCH. This is its nature as well as its name. Here the people crowding come as to a great divine tribunate, from four to six times a week. Here they have their questions answered, their problems solved, their burdens banished, their sorrows soothed, their sins forgiven, their minds enlightened, and their hearts inspired for days to come; here they find Boston's best, Prof.

Make the Gospel Attractive.

A's great choir, Prof. *B's* fine orchestra, and Prof. *C's* immense chorus. The Sabbath begins with prayer and praise at 9.30. The pastor, Rev. *Matthew Mark*, Ph. D., D. D., will preach to-morrow morning on "Sowing and Reaping." Sabbath School, 12 M.; come early to our grand chorus song service. Miss *D E* will sing — her solos always delight; Mrs. *F G*, sacred reading. *H I* invites you to his big Bible class. Strangers welcome to this great *pilgrims'* Sunday school and church. Y. P. S. C. E., 6 P. M.; grand sacred concert at 7 P. M.; preaching by the pastor, 7.30 P. M., on "Capital Robbing Labor." Life-saving service, 9 P. M. In addition to all other superior attractions Mrs. *J K L*, New England's favorite soprano soloist, will sing — morning, "There is a Green Hill Far Away," and evening, "The Holy City" and "On the Cross." Good seats for early comers.

The above is truly a fine bill. It ought to make the gospel of salvation for sinners very attractive. "Here they have . . . their sins forgiven," should, however, be carefully watched, lest it may lead to popery.

A later notice fells us that a committee of the above church will be at the church door to take care of bicyclists and bicycles. An editorial note, apparently furnished from the same fountain, calls pleasant attention to the prophecy of Ezekiel: "The wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house."

Paul, perhaps, might not have made out a program exactly like the above. In fact, he did not have the facilities. He seems to have relied more upon "Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Paul did not have even a bicycle.

Preaching One's Self.

I HAVE met with a peculiar phase of thought in regard to what is to be preached. I had suggested to a young man that he had omitted from his sermon a particular point which would be of great force in his argument, and which was a truth clearly revealed in the Scriptures. He replied that he had considered the suggested statement, but had felt that he could not honestly present it because it had not passed through his own experience. He said this with great modesty and with a spirit which deepened my respect for him. He was afraid of preaching unrealities. Sober, thoughtful, and devout, he desired to present living truth only. Perhaps his position illustrates a reaction from the use of mere formulas. These very formulas may have been the crystallizing of living faiths, but the living faiths were those of persons who had passed away.

Truths understood by experience are mighty. All my days have I believed in the vitality which comes from such experience. A sailor understands the sea. A soldier understands the field. A sick man understands pain. A penitent man understands repentance. A man believing on Christ understands the strength of Christ. When the Methodist minister came to preach under the old elm on Boston Common, he preached a gospel of vital experience which, sounding strange to many in a time of declension, carried power with it because it had the form and testimony of experience. When even such a gos-

pel in time becomes hardened into mere intellectualism, new times of spiritual refreshing become necessary in the church. Spiritual experiences again become the rule.

I believe that many a young man has struggled painfully through seasons of doubt which came because he could not make real certain representations of truth which others had found to be truth. Undoubtedly, many such have received the light which gave peace by spiritual apprehensions, which almost seemed to be revelations. What such a one has come to know he feels that he knows by experience, not meaning thereby the merely outward experience of occurrences, but the inward experience of spiritual being.

But this peculiar trial and relief may make him narrow. He may be led to disparage or even deny all experiences outside of his range. He may be the inhabitant of the torrid zone who did not believe men in the Arctic ever walked upon hardened water. Or, if he admits that others have been led through other paths into other experiences, he does not feel that those others have forces and methods, at least equal to his own.

With, then, all the advantage and power which comes through experience, and to which experience is essential, there are needed cautions. One is, the suggestion of this inadequateness of any experiences in one light to meet the conditions of Christian work. I am not referring to those peculiarities of experience which seem to force men into peculiar departments of labor. Different men have had such different spheres in life and such different training as seem to mark out their course with unerring certainty. Father Taylor could not but preach to sailors; nor could our captain-chaplain to the sailors in Boston do otherwise than make the pulpit his quarterdeck. But the apprehension of truth received into the soul only by personal experience is painfully insufficient for a Christian preacher. In saying this I do not approve of any pretence or any sham. I mean simply that his experience cannot, by the very nature of things, be broad enough to cover the truth which the preacher is commissioned and ordered to declare. This is inevitable because of his limited life. For instance, no one who has never suffered can bring the Christian comfort to the afflicted with the same power as one who has been comforted in like trial. But must the preacher be shut off from declaring that comfort is promised to every one who will cast his burden upon the Lord? Can he not communicate the promise of the Christ in whom he trusts, although he has not been called upon to use that promise in his life? If the preacher can preach only what he has experienced, he is not preaching Christ. He is preaching himself. What Paul wrote to the Corinthians condemns this course: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord."

Another reason for inadequacy in such preaching is the fact that many declared truths from their very nature are absolutely outside of our experience. Historical facts are not to be omitted. Must the preacher ignore the story that Christ was born at Bethlehem and was cradled in a manger; or the song of the angels and the message to the shepherds; or the voice which came at the baptism of the Lord; or the temptations in the wilderness; or the glory of the transfiguration? To pass into divine declarations, is the preacher to suppress the eternity of God, or the divine omnipotence, or the revealed thought of the incarnation — none of which are possible in his experience?

Preaching One's Self.

Are the commandments of the Lord not binding upon men and not to be preached except so far as the preacher has been able to indorse omnipotent commands by reconstruction into himself? Still more, can the preacher dare to ignore the doctrine of the burden borne by the Lord when He suffered upon the cross and made atonement for our sins? Can he refuse to repeat for his Master the promise of the many mansions because he has never been there, or suppress the fearful warnings of the judgment day because it has not come? No; the preacher has a message from his Lord, and he will do well to remember to be a faithful messenger.

I must suggest one more caution. Human experiences are not infallible. They may be visionary, and supposed truth deduced therefrom may be mere vagaries or proud conceits. Indeed, every now and then the world is surprised by what men assert to be new inspirations, meaning thereby not the indwelling and guiding of the Holy Spirit in practical life, but revelations of new truth. Sects arise inflated with visions. They have their time and they pass away. It is not the fault of spiritual experiences, but it is the fault of forgetting that all such experiences, when trustworthy, are experiences of revealed truth and that they do not originate truth. The safeguard of inward experiences is in comparing them with the truth revealed once for all by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, first making sure that the spiritual experiences have their origin in that word, and in the Spirit which uses that word. Better preach the gospel which the Lord Jesus Christ taught and was, if one assumes to be a Christian preacher.

Harmonies.

I KNEW a boy, quite young he was, who took great interest in attending court and watching trials in civil cases. I do not think he could have understood much that was material, but one thing soon impressed him. "Father," he said one day, "I don't think much of these lawyers, they all seem to be one-sided. But I like that man with a bob coat on who sits up behind the counter; he always seems to be fair." The father repeated to the judge the statement of the boy, and the judge, while laughing heartily at the description, felt complimented by the boy's judgment.

While the substance of justice was secured, I am not certain that the "bob coat" and the "counter" were really helpful. A distinguished judge once told me that the giving up of the robe by the Massachusetts judges he regarded as a great misfortune. He thought that the dignity of the court should be maintained, even by outward proprieties of dress. This judge, perhaps somewhat fastidious in his tastes, some would think, demanded that the lawyers before him should pay due regard to dress and be allowed no carelessness of demeanor. The Supreme Court at Washington would doubtless be his *beau ideal*. I hope that even this distinguished gentleman would not regard the tow-colored wigs worn by English barristers as adding anything to their dignity. But there is a fitness of things, and a due adjustment of harmonies is certainly greatly to be desired.

Of course, one must admit that the substance is the main thing, and one who suggests that substance and externals may well be in harmony will be scoffed at as unspiritual. One must run the risk, however, if he has something to say in that direction. Besides, there is something which is more than external and less than substance. We like honesty of expression, but bad grammar and ridiculous mispronunciation do not add to the value of a sermon. Nor does poor music add to the excellence of praise to God. That "broken bread fed the multitude" has been said a thousand times as an excuse for shiftlessness. "Broken bread" was not used in any such sense. The bread was "broken" for proportionate distribution, and the people who were fed were divided and stationed with the definiteness of a military command.

I do not sustain any method which makes an appeal to the eye the great means of impressing the mind by some spectacular process, nor making an appeal to the ear the great vehicle of elevating spiritual nature by the tones of music. But that there should be harmony between spiritual truth and what must meet the eye, and harmony between spiritual impressions and what must meet the ear, is reasonable. It is more than reasonable, it is in accordance with divine law. As people rise in civilization this becomes the better understood. Perfect sincerity can exist, though some do not seem to believe it, where the purest refinement also exists. Roughness and rudeness are not essential to power. There may be a proper respect for position and for places. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man," presents a union of proper spirit and demeanor. I asked my first colonel, in war time, where he found the authority to order out the men by companies for public worship on Sundays — which, by the way, was a great convenience. The old soldier answered: "You saw yesterday that I ordered out the men to salute General ———? I did that because he is a superior officer and entitled to respect as such. Well, I order the men out on Sundays to honor God!"

It is not unreasonable to expect that decent taste should accompany religious methods. It is absurd to suppose that God expects his ministers, especially, to violate his own laws of fitness. Things which excite ridicule as an habitual motive power, and especially things which are disgusting, may attract for a time, but they cannot work good on a broad scale. The church cannot successfully rival a low comedy theatre in the methods of the latter. At least, it must be understood that such methods are purely exceptional and limited, and that the great church of Christ can present the mighty truths of his gospel with spiritual power without them. Indeed, I feel quite sure that a mistake is sometimes made in underrating the taste and intelligence of the people. Is there a person of so low a culture as not to be impressed by a beautiful picture of a child painted by some eminent artist rather than by a similar picture which is a coarse daub? Is there any one, however ignorant of the science of music, who would not, even if unconsciously, catch the spirit of perfect melody and feel the jarring of dissonant substitutes? If there is such an one, daubs and discords are not the proper means of improvement.

Places must not be overlooked. It makes no difference, it is often said, where we worship, but how we worship. This is plausible, but not conclusive. May not spiritual worship find an ally in the place of worship? A soul stricken with sorrow does not find powerful sunlight and clashing music to be

Harmonies.

precisely helps to rest. The very place itself may have its ordinary harmonies. The great hall where the Christian Endeavor met in its magnificent convention was fittingly dressed in red and white, and with triumphant banners. It was all appropriate to the august enthusiasm of the great concourse. But in the places of ordinary worship there are other fitnesses which may well be regarded. Proprieties of architecture may be very simple and be in harmony with divine truth. There are times when the architecture makes itself. I have joined in the administration of the Lord's Supper under the trees which arched over our heads, and we stood upon the green grass. Near by were field guns standing motionless. Not far off were sentinels. But God had made his own architecture in graceful and perfect outlines. I have been at the Lord's Supper in the simple house of worship on the frontier, and the house itself, plain as it was, had nothing in its outlines or in want of appropriateness to be in any way out of harmony with the occasion. The place itself was a missionary in its conformity to the laws of God. The æsthetic is no enemy to the spiritual.

As to Extempore Preaching.

Really, there is no such thing. A dictionary of acknowledged weight defines extempore to be "without previous study or meditation, without preparation; on the spur of the moment, suddenly." If there is any preaching which meets this definition it is not preaching. Indeed, the word entirely misrepresents what people mean when they use it. They mean oral address, without reading from manuscript.

And yet, perhaps, I must begin by acknowledging an exception. A distant relative of mine, a predestinarian Baptist, whom I met but once, told me that he never searched to find a text, and never labored to make a plan of discourse. He waited until a text was impressed upon his mind as the proper one for the occasion, and then spoke as he felt guided to speak. He never failed to obtain a text, although sometimes the people were singing the hymn next preceding the sermon before the text came to him. Yet this man was not a fanatic nor impulsive. He had a strong mind, a calm judgment. He preached for many years to a congregation of intelligent country people, and he had excellent success in his work. How can we account for good results attending preaching without preparation? Simply by denying the assumption that he preached without preparation. He was a great student of the Bible, and could not avoid being impressed by particular texts which afterward appeared to come to him by direct divine guidance. He was an earnest thinker upon Biblical and religious subjects, and he had a strictly logical mind. When, therefore, the occasion came, some previous line of thought inevitably suggested itself, without our denying the divine help which came to a devout, earnest, and prayerful Christian. Moreover, he forgot himself and had no fear of failure. His preaching was greatly upon subjects of deep spiritual experience, and therein he was at home.

But this is not a safe example. It would have been a complete failure but for the constant study which, without his connecting the two in his own mind. gave materials for developing subjects with which he was already familiar. It is for want of this accumulation and assimilation of materials by profound study that much preaching without writing is extremely thin. The essential preparation, so far as the material of the discourse is concerned, is in thorough study upon a broad scale.

There are, then, two kinds of mental preparation. One is constant general study, the other is the special consideration of a particular topic at the time. That this applies to all preaching and is not distinctively limited to what is called extempore, I admit at once. But that it applies peculiarly to the unwritten method is profoundly true. Preparation by human study is indispensable. I call attention to this because it is noticeable that in periods which seem to be marked as those of peculiar spiritual movements, the extempore method (I shall have to use the word) has been adopted on the theory of absolute guidance by the Holy Spirit. It was so in the time of the Wesleys. The Methodists in this country followed. The Free Baptists were practically a unit in their detestation of written sermons. The reason is plain. Inspiration in the speaker was thought to be immediate. It is still the theory among the Quakers. Dr. Behrends, perhaps equally efficient in both methods, and possessing such rare power in both, once ably answered a speaker who limited the power of the Spirit to extempore speech by showing that one could be conscious of divine help as well in writing as in speaking.

Within a few years past we have seen a great increase in extempore preaching in our denomination. I have insisted, in my relations with several groups of young men, that every minister should be thoroughly able to preach the gospel in some emergency, when his manuscripts might all be a hundred miles away. I see the effectiveness of that enthusiasm which may grow when the preacher looks the people directly in the face, untrammelled by a manuscript, and free in his range of diction. But what are the results of the growing practice? As yet we cannot fully answer. A single instance may perhaps be a sample, perhaps not. An intelligent church member, when lately asked the reason why the pastorate of a young man had terminated to soon, gave in substance as follows: The young man had a great gift in preaching "without notes." He had plenty of words and was not destitute of thought. The people were captivated with him on the first Sunday and settled him. But his ability to speak without writing gradually proved too much for him. His sermons became repetitions. He ran in narrow channels where speech was easy. Thoughtful people got tired of him.

Now it is plain that the same result will attend the same lack of study in either style of preaching. But the temptation to such neglect is far greater in the one who abandons writing. The easy talker is in danger, where nothing but a firm and decisive will can keep him in habits of study. The soil easily becomes exhausted. The choice of words is almost impossible. Precision in expression lacks the help of cold writing. Clear argument becomes difficult.

The great success of some of our eminent men in preaching without writing is perhaps a snare to young men. I do not believe that there is one of our pastors who has succeeded in extempore preaching who gave up writing before

As to Extempore Preaching.

he had had thirty years of the broadest and closest study, of the sharpest mental discipline, and of the richest experience. Such men, keeping their minds active, can succeed. If one can succeed without such preparation he is a genius of that order to which very few belong. Even men who have had many years of experience may, in abandoning writing, become diffuse, vapory, misty, and with the dangerous gift of fluidity occupy an hour to express thoughts which might better be condensed into fifteen minutes of time. I may have something more to say on this subject, but just now I suggest, first, that no young pastor can safely run the risk of giving himself exclusively to extempore preaching; he must write sermons even though he never takes a manuscript into the pulpit. And, secondly, that it is not safe for a church to accept a young man without hearing him preach a written sermon, so that it may be seen what he can do in that method of thought, preparation, and adaptation to particular subjects. If the young man is to preach extempore still he must write sermons.

When the Tide Comes In.

FIRST, let it be understood that I have no particular reference to any church whatever in what I am about to write. In fact, the substantial thought of this article, but not its title, was noted down some years ago. I believe the thought was suggested by a recorded instance in the life of some evangelist, who found a church sadly divided, in which much effort to unite separated people had steadily failed. I remember also a church which had been suffering from internal conflict, but where outward quiet had come, under the ministration of a temporary preacher. "We have been peaceful for several months now," said a good old Christian, "is n't it time for the brethren to come together and adjust their differences?" "Do not suggest it," said the minister; "don't you notice that I never even pray in public for peace and brotherly love? The only way to reunion is to have them forget their differences by looking to the Master."

When the great ship St. Paul lately went ashore the men who engaged to take her back into deep water made their efforts only when the tide came in. They did not succeed until the high winds and a great tide co-operated. Then they succeeded in floating the vessel and rejoiced that the danger of destruction had passed away.

Church quarrels, meaning quarrels within a church, it will be felt at once, are terribly injurious to the church itself and to the Christian name in general. But what can prevent them? Sometimes there seems to be an epidemic of such things, and spiritual epidemics are not controlled by any board of health. Then there are some localities in which such cases may naturally be expected. I have one such territory now in mind which has suffered not a little in the last fifty years, but which at present is in a state of quiet. Particular churches have also a reputation for great gifts in this respect. Some real difficulty may also arise in some excellent church, upon which parties are quickly formed.

Sympathies are aroused. A loyalty to some injured person, or to one supposed to be injured, bursts into a flame. Hard things are said. Passion is excited and calm reason cannot operate. Sometimes church discipline is invoked to crush an opponent. Some of the meanest things that I have ever met with have been of this character.

Going back far enough to avoid all sensitiveness of living people, say seventy-five years, there is recorded a very sharp church division on the question of rapidity in singing. One section of the church insisted that all hymns should be sung in a slow measure. Others, I suppose the younger portion, believed they ought to make a joyful noise unto the Lord and insisted on greater speed. Each portion sang the same hymn in its own way at the same time with the natural result. The difficulty eventually divided the town meeting, and I doubt if a perfect reconciliation ever took place.

Another historical case of the last century was one of a serious quarrel between the conservatives who adhered to Tate and Brady and the progressives who advocated Watts. It came at last to a council, which advised as most councils do. It recommended that they use one book in part and the other in part. But this was so vague that the council was recalled and further explanation was given with better effect.

Still another instance was where a good old chorister insisted on pitching the tune too high to suit some of the people. A great controversy arose, which even involved a neighboring church. It was not until thirteen years had passed that the trouble ended. "The warmth of a continuous interest," says a writer, "melts the icy barriers." Confessions were made, and the neighboring church took part in the acknowledgments of error. It may relieve suspicion if I say that this happy reconciliation took place nearly a century and a half ago. But it will be noticed that the disturbance was not ended until the new warmth of religious interest was felt. The tide came in, the tide of Christian love.

In church quarrels there is often some real point at issue. It ought to be considered calmly before it makes a quarrel. Reasonable people can settle their differences. This not being done through reason and kindness and courtesy, self-will takes possession. People are always extremely conscientious in such cases. Chattering busy-bodies repeat and misrepresent what other people say, and elaborately tell how wicked those other people are. Such is the way in which a church quarrel grows. The plain duty of Christians is that they shall never allow a difference of opinion to get beyond the lines of a sweet-tempered and prayerful discussion. Retorts and sharp speeches have no proper place in the church of God. "And the Lord's servant must not strive."

But I do not write this supposing that it will have much weight. People will quarrel, and will do it in the name of the Master. But when they have got tired of it, what then? A thorough church quarrel is never settled without leaving scars. It will often, however settled, leave alienated feelings, for a whole generation. Such a church is fortunate if it is so situated that changes of population bring in new elements. But there may be some help in mediation. A reference to sister churches may bring kindly advice which will appeal with effect to most of those concerned.

But the real remedy is when the tide comes in. When the minds of the

When the Tide Comes In.

people are turned again to their Lord, when the power of the gospel is again felt in their souls by the work of the Holy Spirit, when they are subdued by the sense of their own unworthiness before God, when the desire for Christ's glory drives out their own pride, the rising tide of Christian faith and love will float the church once more into the safe sea, into which no devices, no arguments, no adjustments, no compromises can bring it. You can bring the church into peace and prosperity when the tide comes in.

I remember an illustration given by a visiting minister in one of my prayer meetings in a church near the sea. He pictured a barque thrown up upon the jagged rocks of a reef which were so sharp and bold as to be out of water. So far he did well. But when he proceeded to picture the same vessel getting over those rocks to the other side and into deep water again, and sailing off on the open sea with all sails spread and flag flying, some of my old sailors shook their heads, and one of them whispered to me as we went out, "That was too much. No vessel ever sailed over rocks as he said that one did. That was a wreck, and she went to pieces." A church may get into such a condition that no rising tide can make it worth saving.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

Which is Best?

It can easily be proved in advance that accurate and well-balanced conceptions of doctrine are essential to preaching the gospel with success. Therefore is the necessity of sound theological training in schools. But we are sometimes perplexed by results. Opposite theories of truth demand our allegiance when but one can be held. Which is best?

One of my kindred, who died before I was born, was a noted minister of the gospel. Converted on hearing of the death of Whitefield, whose preaching in life he had resisted, he was irresistibly led into the work of preaching. He soon left, however, our own "order" then established by law, because he did not find there a living experience. He joined the Baptists, but he left, or was forced to leave, because he found himself to be a thorough Arminian. He abhorred the doctrine of predestination, and preached his abhorrence. Jonathan Edwards was to him an abomination. The Westminster Confession had the savor of death to souls, and, if there had been any "consistent Calvinism" in his day, it would have had the same savor of evil. Nor did he keep silence on these things.

But when he died the churches which he had been instrumental in planting numbered many thousands of souls. Therefore his ultra Arminianism was the best way.

Another one of my kindred was a predestinarian Baptist of the most rigid type. To him the "unregenerate" (I speak from discussions with him) were "dead," the Scriptures say, and therefore he never preached to them. "They are dead," he said, "and what sense is there in my preaching to them any more than to the corpses in yonder graveyard?" and he pointed to the burial place beside his pretty, white, country church. "If God chooses to make them alive, He will; but I have nothing to do with that, nor is there anything they can possibly do. They are dead." "Do you not preach to sinners?" "Yes," he answered, "but only to sinners who are already regenerated by the sole act of God." He did not allow Sunday schools, for it is the Scriptural duty of parents to teach their children at home. He would not consent to missionary societies; but, if a man felt called of God to preach to the heathen, he ought to go at once without a society, supporting himself with the help of God. He took a text only as it came to him, never searching for one; and sometimes one did not come until the people were singing the hymn next before the sermon. "But do you never say anything to the unregenerate?" Well, I have said

this: "You are dead in trespasses and sins. You have no power to do anything. If God has determined to regenerate you, He will do so; if not, not. And may God have mercy on your souls!"

But when I learned these and other kindred facts, I learned also that his then long pastorate had been blessed by three times as many conversions, year by year, as the churches of our own wiser preaching in the same State. Therefore his fearful predestination is the best way.

Then these methods, irreconcilable with each other, and, according to our theological teachers, both glaringly erroneous, have both been remarkably blessed of God in the salvation of souls? But both these men were men of faith. The life of each was hid with Christ in God. Each resolute and inflexible, yet each was undoubting, earnest, tender, unsparing in the work of the Lord. Their Christian personality was a moving force. Both held, also, certain great truths — the lost estate of man by nature, the terrible guilt of sin, the terror of the judgment day, the necessity of the new birth, the strictly expiatory atonement of Christ, the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work. They held these as practical truths.

They were alike in exact opposites of experience. The one had felt intensely the evils of an "unconditional election" belief which necessarily destroyed the sense of personal responsibility for a fate fixed by God before the man had any being; and he denounced it. The other had been "converted" four or five times by a self-determining power of his will; until, sad at heart, he searched for some divine purpose which could form a permanent character below his will; and he found it in God's purpose of absolute predestinating one's fate as literally as the potter molds the passive and helpless clay. And he preached it. Each, also, found his place among opposites to himself. The one denying election preached where men had been deadened under that doctrine. The predestinarian preached where men thought they could glide in and out of divine grace at pleasure. Perhaps each was a corrective.

The principle suggested by these facts may have a broader comprehension. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the divinely written test. When theologies clash, and yet each secures as good results as the other, who shall assume to say which is the best? Who shall, in the face of results, declare that *any* provincial theology is the only reliable and genuine article, and has a special patent from God? Yet it is easy to make this mistake.

A sick Indian once drank of the waters of a wonderful spring, and was cured. He drank from a cup made of birch bark, and drank when the sun was a hand's breadth above the western horizon. Therefore a birch bark cup and a sunset sky were essentials of a cure. Another sick Indian also drank of the waters of the wonderful spring and was cured. But he drank when the sun was a hand's breadth above the eastern horizon, and he drank from a cup made of half of a gourd. Therefore a gourd cup and a morning sky were essentials of a cure.

These were superstitions. True. And a scientific white man came and laughed them to scorn. It was the water which cured, and not the cups. But he would not let a sick man drink until he should have heard, understood, and intelligently accepted a minute, complete, well-balanced, and consistent

analysis of the water, even to a percentage of hundredths of every ingredient, together with an understanding of what every ingredient, either alone or in combination, was to effect. Pending which, the tired, sick man died.

The Indians were superstitious, but they drank and were cured. The white scholar was wise, but he mistook a chemical analysis of the "water of life" for "the power of God unto salvation." And perhaps God is not so dependent on our own "system" of truth as we thought Him to be.

Standards.

A STANDARD is something considered as a model or test to which other things should conform. Standards are inevitable and should be rightful, definite, and accurate. "Thirty-two degrees temperature" is a vague expression. Does it mean Fahrenheit, or Réaumur, or Centigrade? Standards will vary, also, according to the level of men's minds, and the predominant thought which governs life. This fact, with neglect to specify the subject in mind, is sometimes confusing.

Lately I took up a book which was stamped on its side, in elegant gilt letters, "The American Standard of Perfection." With the same pleasingly curious feeling which makes one scrutinize the postmark of a letter, and guess at the handwriting of the direction, when a moment would open it and solve all doubts, I wondered what the book was about. Did it refer to literature, art, or morals? Was it a book on theology? But I opened it, as usual dipping into the book about a third from its beginning, which is always the best way to look into a new book. My eye fell at once upon a full-page picture of a stately cockerel. It was a ferocious bird from comb to spur, and with magnificent tail feathers. I was naturally indignant. This the American standard of perfection? The work, I determined, was evidently the spleen of some jealous Englishman, envious of the growth and glory of the great American Republic, who wished to stigmatize us with such an outrageous comparison. However, I examined further, and found that the outside title merely expressed the grade of thought of the author. Inside, the book was a treatise upon "different breeds of poultry"! The cockerel was all right. The author doubtless had not supposed that there was any other theme in the world except poultry, or that anybody could think of perfection except in connection with a game cock. The spirit was right. The world prospers most when every person considers his own department the pivot upon which all things turn, whether it be the boy who sweeps out the store, or the commander of an army.

One is not so well satisfied, however, as to some titles. When we read that a certain person is champion of England, and discover that this champion, who stands up to represent England before the world, is not a statesman, nor the leader of its religious institutions, nor its foremost man in moral thought, nor a general of armies, but simply a muscular man who can pound somebody else with his fists and take a like pounding longer than any other man in England, the title becomes rather ridiculous. It fits, however, exactly the grade of those who like it, and who think only of the pluck and vigor of this primitive kind of warfare.

Standards.

I inquired of a collegian, "Who is the best man in your class?" His instant answer was, "Jones, by all odds; the boat would be nothing without him" — which refers, I suppose, to aquatics. If I had asked some other man, I probably should have been told, "Brown, of course; he 'll have the valedictory sure." If I had asked a third, doubtless I should have heard, "Smith, certainly — the most generous fellow you ever knew." If I had asked one of the faculty, I do not know on what basis the answer would have been given, and I am not sure that the faculty itself would agree. The moral or religious standard would be one which would, of course, defy human selection. As to college faculties, it is fair to suppose that each member considers his own department as the most important in the college. At least, Ihope he does, for, if so, each chair will be well manned, and the whole will prosper.

There is a great deal in this matter of standards. It is not confined to poultry, or boat crews, or city interests. What is the standard? is a vital question in reference to supposed truths, and the vein running through all the preceding illustrations runs into our judgments as to religious truths. The old catch question, Which weighs the most, a pound of feathers or a pound of gold? (a question by no means so simple as it appears on its face to be) parallels weight of arguments. I remember what an astute Senior at Andover told me, as I was coming under the teaching of that unequalled prince of theological analysis, Edwards A. Park, "Watch his definitions, for if you assent to his definitions you cannot escape from his argument." This was true. So also I recall, for a different line of thought, a statement made by an eminent divine in a controversy — I think it was with Professor Park, but I cannot now verify it — to this effect: "I am sure that these views are in accord with the standards of our Church, and I think also with the Word of God." The distinction and the uncertainty were significant. The standards had taken the place of the Word of God. That the Church can establish standards of things to be believed is the assumption of the Roman Catholic Church. Protestants, of all kinds, theoretically assert that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. Protestant Christians may properly declare, in somewhat systematic form, what they understand the Scriptures to teach, but they are in no way authorized to make this systematic form an obligatory standard or a determining test.

There is something magnificent in the arrogance of the Roman Church in its assuming to make such formulas authoritative; but when a band of believers in some little locality presumes to exercise such power, and demands submission by the disciple of Jesus, on pain of rejection, the assumption becomes ridiculous. Such a local band thereby ceases so far to be a Christian church, and subsides into a club, under a constitution which the Lord never gave. Protestants cannot stand on Papal ground, and, unless they may safely trust the Word of God alone as their standard, and the power of the Spirit as their security, Protestantism is a delusion. No; the Bible is the infallible standard, and Bible religion is the true kind.

Don't Prove Too Much.

I HEARD an experienced lawyer give that advice to a young man years ago. He had legal practice in his mind, of course, but common sense applies generally. Proving too much may be disastrous. Where "they all with one consent began to make excuse," the only result of the most satisfactory excuses was the loss of the marriage supper. When persons make to themselves excuses perfectly convincing for not accepting the salvation there is in the Lord Jesus, the only result is failure to receive that salvation. The better their excuses, the more fatal the end. If they feel that they are thoroughly justified in their excuses, they have proved too much.

The lawyer's advice was not quite in this line. Doubtless he had in view the wisdom of stopping at the right point. I have personal recollection of an instance where a witness testified very strongly to the bad reputation for truth and veracity of one who was both a principal party and a witness. The latter's counsel, in cross examination, gently said, "Are not you somewhat prejudiced against that person?" "Very much so, indeed, sir," was the frank and rather unexpected reply. The counsel was so unwise as to push the matter: "Will you give us the reason why you are prejudiced?" The facts given in reply were so crushing that it demolished the person referred to, and with him the case.

There are cases where proving too much, or appearing to do so, badly reacts. There has been some discussion regarding the doctrinal conditions of admission to our churches. There will have to be much more before the question is settled. One consideration I have not yet seen referred to. Can our churches receive persons who have scruples or ignorance about the doctrinal tests imposed at present, or will they reject such persons, notwithstanding satisfactory evidence of Christian experience, Christian character, and a Christian spirit? This is the question. Such a person applies to one of our churches. He is told that he cannot be admitted because of his scruples. He says in answer that he could be admitted on this basis into a Presbyterian church, a Methodist church, or an Episcopal church. Our church replies to him that it is not safe for us to receive him and such, although satisfied as to their faith in Christ, because all our members are voters. Do not the brethren who maintain this position, and think they prove it, see that they are making the most severe and damaging arraignment of Congregationalism that they could possibly make? If it is proved that Congregational churches cannot safely receive into their fold any honest and orderly Christian, then it is proved that Congregational churches are schismatic, and incompetent to do the work which the Lord wants churches to do. It proves that these other denominations are superior to ours. Brethren, don't prove too much. Your argument all tends to show the superiority of Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians, in their finding a way of receiving into church fellowship all disciples of the Lord. Either the logic is a failure, or Congregationalism is worse than a failure.

A man said to me once, "The Bible teaches thus and so, and therefore I do not believe the Bible." The answer was ready: "The Bible does not teach

Don't Prove Too Much.

thus and so. You have been deceived." A member of my class in the seminary, in giving proof texts on a particular doctrine, was so wicked as to test the class by giving a quotation from the Shorter Catechism. I do not think there were three persons in the class who noticed that the familiar quotation was not from the Bible. Professor Park's amused glance showed that he appreciated the point, but he kept silent. Do not many people mix up Bible and human contrivances until they do not know which is which?

I have in my hands a very painful letter sent me early the present year from a man whom I never have seen. My failure to reply to his request for advice brought a second and a most piteous appeal. A man of mature years, a member of the church in good standing, and one whose friends would be shocked if they knew how his faith had fallen from under him, wished to know what he could do. Should he tell the church that he had ceased to believe? A deeper question was in the fact that his condition was not one of bitterness, but one of sadness, even to himself. I can see in his letters the painful regret, unexpressed in words, at the gradual change which has come over him. Evidently he mourns over it. What was his history? Trained to believe in certain severe views, he accepted them in his childhood as a matter of course, being told that they were of divine authority, while probably giving more heed at the time to the simple facts of the gospel message. He lived in the ordinary Christian way for years. He did the ordinary Christian work, and I think some official work. Gradually serious thought led him to feel that some of the things which he had accepted, features of a harsh and ultra system, — "hyper" I suppose is the word, — were derogatory to God, and revolting to the instincts of humanity. Yet he had been so trained that these things seemed to be a pervading feature of the Bible system. The result to his thoughtful mind and sensitive heart was sure. He did not write me all these things, but he wrote me so much that I see these things. The logicians had proved too much. They had made him feel that their impious notions were a part of the Bible. The stronger their arguments, the more fatal the result.

What is the remedy in such a case? Perhaps, first of all, to tell him that these things which have wrecked his faith are not of the Bible. Let him cast them aside. Let him read the Bible in a simple and earnest spirit in the sunlight, forgetful of everything which has cast a blight upon him. But especially let any one like him begin at the beginning of discipleship, as a needy and sinful soul go to a loving God, and ask that the forgiveness, the strength, and the light, which that loving Father can give him through Jesus Christ, may be vouchsafed unto him.

The people who have proved too much have strewn the shore with wrecks. Let them argue as much as they please in favor of their own notions on their basis, but they should let the blessed Word of God alone.

Jig-Saw Religion.

A FEW months ago I was present at a funeral service where the Scripture reading was made up of verses of Scripture cut out of various parts of the Bible, and tacked together so as to make new paragraphs in a fanciful way. They were read, I think, from a book known as a Pastor's Manual, or something of that kind, a copy of which I threw away many years ago. These Scripture sentences were not quoted, printed, and read as distinct sentences, but as part of a whole, patched together on a supposed similarity of thought. A good deal of it was made up of verses picked out of the different Psalms. This composite indicated the belief that God did not know how to write His own Psalms. I lately found the same process in a book of selections for responsive reading in public worship. Pieces of Psalms had been taken out of their place, and put together in a new arrangement to make a whole by themselves. Did not the compiler know that every Psalm has its own divine structure, its purpose, its beginning and its end? In each of these cases I thought at once of my older son's jig-saw in the time of his boyhood.

It was an admirable machine, that jig-saw. It was rather expensive, it is true, in the breakage of saws. It used up a good deal of thin rose-wood, black walnut, cherry, and oak. But the boy used to saw out brackets and crosses and ornaments of various kinds quite skilfully, and when he put them together they were effective. I regret to say that one time I misread his written request for me to send him "*sq. ft.*" of oak into "29 ft.," but sent him only fifteen feet as a compromise, which amount, however, astonished him. Jig-saws need caution.

There is a house which I often see built on the jig-saw plan. It has a vast amount of pine-board brackets, and pieces of wood with holes in them stuck on in all sorts of fantastic ways. It has imaginary supports, all sawed out by jig-saws, placed where no supports could possibly be needed. It is considered a very attractive house, and to cap the whole its colors, now fashionable, always remind me of the first line in a poem which I found in the school reader used by my father in his boyhood: —

"A white old hen with yellow legs."

You can get a great deal of fancy out of pine boards by the use of jig-saws, at a very moderate cost; but I have some doubts as to the stability of the ornaments. Moreover, they will need white and yellow paints very often.

Now it is true that quite an ingenious burial service can be made by this system. In fact, it is rather picturesque. But as to the real comfort which can be had from the Word of God, is it not a fair supposition that its natural order is best? This does not forbid the taking of a whole or main part of a Psalm as it reads, with a selection from the Gospels and another from the Epistles. But the miscellaneous collection of single verses put together in a kind of mosaic work is not the divine method. I think it is generally resorted to only by young ministers who are earnest to exercise their ingenuity. Their tastes change in due time. Thus my boy gave up his jig-saw long ago.

Nor do I fancy any better the jig-saw system of Scripture doctrine. The printed creed of the church of my boyhood had every article followed by

Jig-Saw Religion.

references to proof texts. The ingenious minister had sawed out Scripture passages, taken them entirely out of their connection, and put them at the end of each piece of his statement of supposed truth. Some of them were about as applicable as that well-known quotation of the words "Top-knot, come down," by an ancient preacher, when he wanted a text from which to preach against that arrangement of women's hair then called "top-knots," and sawed through the word "house-top." My boy's jig-saw could have sawed out Scripture texts in the same manner. In fact, the collector of those proof texts undoubtedly had a jig-saw. The ordinary system of proof texts has the plain marks of the saw. Declaring a doctrine in theological study and then finding the texts to sustain it tends to take Scripture sentences entirely out of their connection. We frequently see instances where some particular phrase is taken out of its place, made the foundation of some special hobby, and magnified as being the essential of all truth. It is the jig-saw system. Other parts of Scripture could be cut out in the same manner and be equally misused. It is noticeable that the jig-saw man never cuts out a text which, thus taken out, is opposed to his hobby. To cut out an Orientalism and make it mathematical, or to cut out the "ten thousand times tent housand" and make it a census of the heavenly city, is absurd. Doubtless every thoughtful reader of the Scriptures comes to realize that a Scripture text has truthfully just the meaning which it has in the place where it is written, and no more. Its true meaning is had in taking it in its connections. Was it one of Hogarth's pictures in which he purposely and most ingeniously destroys all perspective? Scripture passages need perspective. They must not be taken out of their place. If they are, we lose the delicate meanings which belong to them; all the peculiar adaptations to peculiar experiences; all the fitnesses for similar circumstances in the lives of believers. What a comfort it is that the Revised Version has, so far as needed, obliterated the jig-saw work which so badly obscured the meaning of the Word of God in the chapter and verse barbarity, and left the marginal figures only to facilitate reference!

If I dared to tread upon awful ground, which I dread to do, I should suggest that plenty of "Exercises" for Harvest and Christmas are now being made ready for Sunday schools by the jig-saw method. A certain number of songs, a certain number of Scripture passages re-arranged for responsive readings, suitably allotted to superintendent, teachers, pupils, boys partly and partly girls, in turn, with an occasional chance for the pastor, with other things which ingenuity can devise — all these suitably mixed with repetitions to the last degree — are doubtless well along at this present time. They will mostly show the marks of the jig-saw, thin pieces sawed into fanciful shapes, and put together by ingenious workmen. But I must not even hint such things about Sunday school work! In fact, good will yet grow out of all these efforts. Nor should I dare suggest that some of the ornamental attachments, laboriously fastened on to our forms of public worship, are not the natural growths of Christian experience and Christian devotion, even though I think of the white and yellow house, and my boy's forsaken jig-saw often comes up in memory. By the way, one of the best gifts a perplexed father can make to an ingenious boy next fall is a jig-saw. Only don't use it on the Bible.

Conscientious Contentiousness.

If I remember correctly, the above was one of Cotton Mather's bright expressions. The hardest kind of contentiousness is the conscientious kind, unless it is excelled by that kind in which the contentious man thinks he is conscientious when he is only self-willed.

It is a remarkable fact that contentions among Christians are the hardest and the bitterest of all contentions. Politicians will fight with the greatest energy, and a week after election there is not a ripple of disturbance. But a contest between Christian people over any subject, from the use of a bass-viol to the location of a meeting house, will create a feud which will last till the elders of that generation have departed this life. What is the reason of this? Conscience. Brethren think that they are standing up for the cause of God, and that they would be recreant to duty if they did not fight so long as fighting power remains. This spirit is to be respected. It is the same as that which made martyrs go readily to the stake. Conscience in little things is just as important as conscience in great things, and if a good brother conscientiously believes that he is called upon to contend earnestly for a particular order of worship in the house of God, — as to the proper place of the Doxology for instance, — believing this to be a part of the faith once delivered to the saints, he is entitled to great respect. He fights stubbornly because of his religious principle.

There is, of course, some danger that the conscience of the contentious may not always be conscience. The floating story of the colored man who declared he could not do a certain thing because his conscience would not let him, is in point. "What do you mean by conscience?" he was asked. "Something in here," striking his breast, "which says I *won't!*" I am quite sure that persons who have examined into church dissensions find that nine tenths of the evil is self-will, while the contentious always insist that they are compelled by conscience, and the more talk there is of conscience the less there is of that article — not that I have any sympathy with the evasion that "there is always wrong on both sides," and the two are therefore on an equality. There is always the main point upon which one side is right and the other side is wrong, and both think they are conscientious. It is not always easy to discriminate between conscience and self-will. I have known cases where vindictiveness was denominated a conscientious duty. There are cases, it is sad to say it, where divisions have been caused or kept up, under the guise of conscience, by persons whose departure to a better land would be a sweet relief to those who desire reunion. I wonder if some of these persons understand that fact — persons who contentiously interfere with every plan of peace, and say their consciences require it. It would be easy to mention some hamlet, where two small meeting houses stand eying each other across the street, or one turning its back on the other, whose congregations are waiting for three or four conscientiously contentious old men to die. Speaking of splitting a weak church into two parts, I remember a council in my youth when the question was raised how two churches could be supported where one could hardly live. A wise old minister replied, "I have always noticed that grace and old Adam

Conscientious Contentiousness.

can do much more than grace alone." When my turn came, I said, "Doubtless Dr. —— is right, but I do not like to deliberately organize old Adam into a church." In another case as many years ago, where a church was split into two parts, each claiming to be the church, and where the practical division turned upon the question as to what official could call a church meeting, an enthusiastic and honored divine, on hearing one side only, said to the leader of that faction, "Go on, go on, brother, the Lord is on your side!" When that leader repeated the remark to me, I replied: "I have had no information from the Lord, but the Supreme Court will not be on your side. You two should at once call a mutual council." They followed, however, the advice of the old divine, and it cost them eleven hundred dollars by verdict of a jury. Both sides came together easily, when they agreed to call an arbitrating council; some conscientiously contentious persons dropped out, or were ignored, and they had peace.

Yet there can be no doubt that many bitter contests are really made bitter by honest conscientious differences. The parties undoubtedly believe, each for itself, that respective positions or methods are vital, and must be maintained. This scrupulousness is not to be lightly censured. Wherein is it faulty? In the fact that it is intolerant. Other people's views are just as likely to be correct as mine. Nobody has any monopoly of divine inspiration or human learning. Some years ago we had great contests between "old school" and "new school." They divided churches, they made seminaries. What was the issue of that strife? Neither side conquered, each came to feel the Christian goodness of the other, and a mutual toleration insensibly came in. It did not make the adherents of either view less tenacious of conviction. I cannot but hold for myself, pardon the self-expression, to the old views that the Holy Scriptures are absolutely authoritative; that the whole human family is fallen by inheritance; that sinfulness lies far below action or choices; that the atonement for sin is expiatory, and not governmental; that the sinner is actually and literally unable to repent except by specific divine grace; that the divine grace is not limited to motive, but is the work of the Holy Ghost directly upon the heart — these seem to me to be facts, and facts to which there is now once more an increasing and necessary drift of belief. But it would be foolish and wicked in me not to see that many a man, wiser and far better than I am, and fully honored of God in his work, still holds those "new school" views; and it is not for me to do more than demand liberty for myself and to honor my brethren. We can hold our respective opinions in mutual charity and gentleness. If we are to debate our differences on any points, or any methods, God can give us grace to do it with mutual respect, and without an unkind word or an unkind thought. There can be conscience without contentiousness.

One Test.

One day in the summer of 1861 a Virginia planter, or rather what a Yankee would call a farmer, invited our colonel to come out to supper the next day and also bring some of his officers. The colonel thoughtlessly accepted the invitation, and took five or six of us with him. It was a mile or two outside of our pickets, but the Southern army was not very near, and even our commander, an experienced soldier of the Mexican War, had not come to realize the new state of things. The planter's servants took our horses, and the planter welcomed us to his house. The supper was long delayed. The host occasionally went out and returned. In time I saw that the colonel was becoming disturbed. At last, however, a hospitable supper was ready, and we were called to the table. I am afraid the colonel's appetite was not very good at that moment. But before we were seated the gray-haired planter, standing perfectly erect, asked a blessing, which was really quite a long prayer. He was a true Presbyterian and thoroughly reverent. The colonel's appetite returned and his face lost its thoughtful expression. When we were riding back he said to me, "You noticed that I was getting pretty anxious before supper." "I did, sir, and saw the reason." "Well," said the colonel, "it was extremely thoughtless for me to come outside of our lines this way, and I realized it after our horses were taken nobody knows where, and the old man kept going out. It flashed on my mind that it was a nice trap, and I kept expecting the house would be surrounded and we with nothing but side arms. I should have been in such a ridiculous position, too. But when the old man made such a prayer, I knew he was honest and could n't mean any treachery." Our colonel, by the way, was not of our faith, but he showed me once the worn pocket Bible which his mother gave him, and which he had carried all through the Mexican campaigns.

This recollection illustrates the truth that real praying is a test of character. It was such a test to the mind of this sagacious soldier — a man who had been educated at West Point, who had seen war in its sternest forms, who had served among the Indians, and who had himself been severely wounded years before — that he instinctively believed in the honesty of this planter on no other testimony than that of his simple, guileless, and earnest prayer. It would always be a perfect test, if the conditions were similar. It is a test which lies back of the virtues and even of the Christian graces, for it is the communion of a soul with God, which necessarily excludes deception and which antedates the virtues and the graces. That communion is the channel by which the virtues and the graces come. It is not always true that there shall be no outward deception, but as a principle and under suitable circumstances the test is a good one. In fact there is not much need of fear as to the impressions received, for public prayer when unreal seldom awakens confidence in sensitive minds.

There is a significant application of this principle in the early history of Massachusetts. John Eliot's converted Indians, and I think those in southeastern Massachusetts also, were known as "the praying Indians." It was expressive. This title was all that was needed, and the best title which could

One Test.

be used, to distinguish the Christian Indians from their savage kindred. A "praying Indian" had abandoned pagan rites, buried his tomahawk, ceased to hunt his enemies, and become trustworthy and industrious. It was all included in the adjective "praying," and the then common use of this word was natural. It is equally significant now. Not now for what the praying brings in return, but as a test of a changed character. The test may sometimes be practically applied. I remember a young man who, in a time of extended awakening, appeared to be decided to begin the new life, and yet there was something unsatisfactory. Repeated conversations failed to reach the difficulty, until one day, when he was in my study, I said to him, "Have you really and positively pledged yourself to the service of the Master?" He thought he had. Then I said: "We will see about that. We will kneel down together and I shall offer a brief prayer, and then you will follow, pledging yourself to the Lord's service forever, and I shall be a witness." He shrank back in reluctance. "Yes, you will," I said. We kneeled, and in time I waited for him. He delayed, but I remained in silence. At last he prayed and pledged himself in a broken voice, as I had insisted. The spell was broken. He had heard his own voice in its pledge in the presence of another, and he soon felt that he had never made that complete and formal surrender before. From that moment he was a praying man. I would not attach undue importance to a formal act, but, when a specific decision is necessary, the formal act is requisite. It makes a principle concrete.

What I have written above is in no part of a sermon, and never has been. Extracts from old sermons are not fit to be newspaper articles, although a whole sermon is often valuable. But it occurs to me that the theme of this paper and the appropriate text for a sermon in the line of these thoughts are embodied in the touching story of the fear of Ananias of Damascus when the Lord directed him to go to the street which is called Straight, and to the house of Judas, and there to find Saul of Tarsus. Saul? The disciples were waiting in fear. They knew that their persecutor, who had been the terror of the saints in Jerusalem, had come hither with power from the priests. Inquire for Saul? Well might Ananias tremble. But the man in the house of Judas was no persecutor now, he no longer breathed out threatenings and slaughter. He was a humble and contrite servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the test and proof of the whole transformation the Lord Himself expressed in saying, "For, behold, he prayeth."

I Don't Know.

"He was n't afraid to say he did n't know," was the triumphant remark of a good layman in reference to the examination of his new pastor by the installing council. I have seen the same congratulatory assurance in a newspaper report of such an examination, the reporter clearly having been enlightened to that effect by a similarly good brother. Has not somebody enjoyed the air of bland meekness and the modest drooping of the eyelid which accompanied the reply, "I don't know"?

Humility is so charming. Did not the great Newton say something about a child picking up pebbles on the ocean's shore? This little fashion I think is waning. It was doubtless in part a protest against the wonderfully elaborated systems which it was understood that students must have mastered, and which exhibited the constructed framework of all truth, furnished explanations of all mysteries, and provided answers for all objections. So far, the new fashion was good. But when it implies that profound wisdom consisted in being profoundly ignorant, which was also somewhat the secret of the novelty, it is perhaps well to remember that a man who does not have a tolerably clear understanding as to what he believes to be the great Christian truths, and why he believes them, may perhaps have needed a longer post-graduate course.

New England has had enough of rationalistic systems of doctrine — their divisions and sub-divisions, their hair-splitting distinctions, their remorseless dissections — and has got tired of them. But that this method is passing away, and faith in living forces is supplanting trust in ingenious contrivances, does not do away with the absolute necessity of hard study, deep thinking, clear understanding and accurate results.

A minister ought to know what he believes. He ought to be able to make a definite statement of each of the great Biblical facts. He ought to have an understanding of the relation of these great facts to each other. Vapory notions are not creditable, nor can a man defend or preach a vapor. He will have force only when he has positive convictions, such convictions as he is ready to avow with manly frankness. What one is not required to do is to declare his philosophies, if he has any; but when one considers how much philosophies shape beliefs he will think it desirable to have sound philosophies. He is not obliged to define the infinite, for that is a contradiction in terms. But he can tell whether he believes in the infinite, and he can tell where the centre of a great truth is, as one can tell where the noonday sun is but cannot tell the line where the twilight expands into morning or contracts into night. No one is required to pronounce upon the exactness of things not fully revealed, but he certainly ought to know what is revealed.

A thorough and systematic study of truth is indispensable, and Bible study is the prime requisite. But nobody should think that a dozen lead pencils and an Oxford edition with limp covers coming over the edges, although excellent in their way, are Bible study. Nor is the reading of publishers' comments on the uniform Sunday school lessons the Bible study required of men who are to be leaders and guides of religious life. There must be habits of patient investigation, mental discipline, strong thinking. The result ought to be clear conceptions of truth, and there never ought to be a vagueness which may be understood to imply an indifference to the importance of truth, or undeclared doubts as to troublesome facts. There is a vast science of religion, and I use the word science in its best sense. I do not want to hear a man preach a science of religion, but I do want to feel, when I hear him preach, that he knows how to classify the truths if it be only to get them in the right place.

A distinction may usually be made, I think, between great principles or facts, and minor details. The latter may not be all remembered, or even entertained. I think that no eminent lawyer would suddenly give an opinion in an intestate probate case without turning to the statutes themselves; but in grasp

I Don't Know.

of great principles a man might be a Marshall or a Mansfield. It is said that Webster, when retained in some case, would walk the floor in deep thought until, turning to an assistant, he would say, "The principles governing this case are thus and so; look up the precedents to match." But Webster did not say about the principles, "I don't know," and think that this was wisdom.

The uncertainty sometimes exhibited as to some subject of inquiry reminds me of a story of a bank bill which John P. Hale used to like to tell when I was a boy. Those were the days of State banks, and counterfeit bills were frequent. If a man had a bill as to which he was in doubt he asked the cashier of a near bank to examine it. A farmer in Strafford County thus sent a bill fifteen miles by the stage-driver who made his trip once a week. The driver happened to forget to submit the bill, but on his return told the owner that he had left it with the cashier who wanted time to study it. He forgot it again the next week, but gave it back to the owner, pretending that he had done the errand. "Well," said the owner, "did the cashier say it was genuine?" "No-o-o," said the driver; "he did n't say it was exactly genuine." "Well, did he say it was a counterfeit?" "No-o-o; he did n't say it was exactly a counterfeit." "Then what did he say?" The driver did not want to commit himself, and he was equal to the emergency and answered, "The cashier said he thought the bill was kind of middlin'."

The Re-discovered Christ.

York, Eng., 1891.

This expression was used in some paper or address at the Council in London. It excited no comment, and indeed appeared to be received, not only without surprise, but as a familiar phrase. I judged, therefore, that it implied a drift in the theology of our English brethren, or perhaps a rearrangement of doctrine — if I am permitted to use the word "doctrine."

The phrase struck me at first rather unpleasantly. Has Christ been hidden? It suggested the concealed treasures of ancient cities lately exhumed; or some statue disinterred in its beauty from its hiding place; or something like the priceless Rosetta stone in the British Museum, which unlocked the mysterious language stamped upon ancient records of the East; or like an old parchment whose original record had been covered by another. The re-discovered Christ. It implies that it was known that He once existed, but where He had since been buried was known only by late discoveries.

But after the first unpleasantness wears off reflection may find something in this phrase. Possibly the real office and glory of the Lord may be obscured by some covering which men have thrown over him, or weakened in power by bad setting of truth, or lost by evil personal experience. Then in some measure Christ is re-discovered whenever the mistakes are rectified and he comes forth again as he is. The Romanist has a true atoning Christ, but the mother and the saints and doctrines of works may hide his glory. Protestants may, by some extreme, reach a similar result. Is it so? And do our brethren rightly claim some discovery?

The Jerusalem Chamber at the great Abbey is impressive to the visitor because from that room was sent out the Westminster Confession nigh two hundred and fifty years ago. The work of the great men who sat there is a great work. It has had marvellous power in some parts of the Church of Christ. Are those persons who framed the Confession not now authoritative? Unfortunately we do not know what they now believe. It is purely ridiculous for some men to insist that that particular scheme of stating divine truth is binding through the ages. It was a wonderful digest. On the whole we reverence it. But its "limited atonement" for the elect, its Islam doctrine of fate, its "elect infants" horror, must be eliminated. Yet when you begin to amend you ruin the document. It is too logical to admit of amendment. It remains a monument of perplexity to brethren who try to amend. To add is only to add inconsistencies. Why not let it stand like old cathedrals, grand edifices, but not intended for modern gospel work? One sees in the Tower of London many sets of plate armor. They are brightly polished and well preserved. But you notice that an American of average size could not get into one out of a hundred. They are all too small, and, if not, they are useless for modern warfare. The Jerusalem Chamber has a better memory connected with it; it is that from this room went out, a few years ago, the revision of the Bible. The old Confession overshadowed Christ with an iron fate, but it had Christ in it. Readjustment will do no harm.

No harm. Bringing Christ plainly forward hurts no doctrine. His divinity is the more assured. The fallen condition of all mankind, the terrible guilt of sin, the natural helplessness of a fallen race, the need and glory of the atoning sacrifice, the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work, the awful certainty of doom for sin — all these are made only more vivid by the exaltation of our Lord. The truth remains. We need to learn. The Unitarian innovation was a providential blessing to our churches. They are better for it. The humanity of our Lord had been lost sight of. It is needful that it be brought to view. It was brought out, and after the first shock of controversy the tenderer, the sympathetic, part of our Lord's nature became dear to believers.

But it seems to me that the theory of a great discovery needs limiting — mainly to scholastic theology. The thinkers in the study, the men who deal in logic as to the infinite which defies logic — they need to "re-discover Christ." But let nobody think that the heart of the Christian Church needs to "re-discover Christ." It has never lost him. Not even have the speculative philosophers in religious truth been in their Christian life without the vision of the Master. Not even the sternest partisan but had that knowledge. Distinguish between their iron logic, their merciless dogmas, and their Christian life. Read the letters of John Winthrop, leader of the Massachusetts emigration, and those of his noble wife, if you want to find the sweetest knowledge of Christ. Not only the saintly wife of Jonathan Edwards, but that man of iron nerve himself, needed no one to "re-discover Christ" for them. Had the Lord hid himself from Nettleton and Finney and Kirk and Bushnell, from Judson and Poor and the countless host of missionaries? Is the Master invisible to our noble frontier preachers and their noble wives, suffering hardship and went?

Go back a little and bring up to view, in a generation gone, the saintly par-

The Re-discovered Christ.

ents and grandparents whose sweetness of faith gave them holy old age and triumphant departure. Did they need to "re-discover Christ"?

No. Distinguish between dogmatists, proud of their notions, and the simple, loving, believing church. Let us not magnify the discoveries of the writers, if they make discoveries. Christians will not lose, never have lost, the vision of the Redeemer's glory. Let the speculating speculate and the writers write. They will indeed influence men's lives, but the Master will control it all.

I thought of that expression, "re-discovered Christ," even by night in this foreign land where I write. Is there any need of it? Yes, he who once had a living faith but has let foolish unbelief come in, he who has lost the precious sight of his Lord by allowing worldly ambitions and cares to draw him away, he who has forgotten the simplicity of prayer and reading the Word of God, he who has allowed temptations to draw him into callous sin — he has lost the sight of his Lord, and he needs, most terribly he needs, to "re-discover Christ," his Redeemer, his Saviour. No speculations will accomplish this work. "Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" is his only method. Does somebody need and will he pardon this message?

It Means Federation.

LIMITED to the selection of a single supposed result of the Council [International Congregational, London, 1891], I trespass so far as to say that to me perhaps the most impressive occurrence was the first calling of the roll of members at the opening session. A hundred Americans, from homes scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific, had crossed the ocean to greet their brethren in the fatherland, and a hundred more were there from the European continent, from Asia, from the Pacific, from North America. It was the first roll-call of the Congregationalists of the world. It signified, for the first time, their unity. It was a historical date in the record of the living church. Sitting there in almost helpless weakness, it also seemed to me like ancient roll-calls of soldiers summoned to duty. Perhaps I dreamed and thought of banners.

The single action of the Council which I may consider naturally followed from the unity of our churches made concrete in the roll-call. It has been suggested that the Council could wisely have given deliverances, or declarations, on matters which were discussed. There was a marked absence of such. This was doubtless in accordance with a deliberate purpose. Perhaps it was wise at a first Council. Our people are jealous of dictation. A second Council may take a medium course with safety and advantage. Almost the only declaration made was in a resolution in harmony with the spirit of one of the topics. It seemed to me that the opportunity ought not to be lost for contemplating a great onward step, and the following resolution, unanimously and heartily adopted, was the result: —

"*Resolved*, That for the better manifestation of the unity of the Church of Christ throughout the world this International Council of Congregational

Churches will heartily welcome a fraternal federation, without authority, of all Christian bodies, at such early date as the providence of God will permit."

This proposal has been favorably considered in various denominational papers. It looks, in my opinion, to almost the only practical method of formal Christian unity. No one denomination is to absorb, little by little, other denominations. Differences of temperament of themselves tend to separate Christian bodies. The mingling of individuals in great conventions, like that of the Christian Endeavor Society, wonderfully promote Christian fellowship. But formal co-operation can be had only by the mutual action of the highest representative bodies of the denominations. Their mingling into one is not to be expected. Their federation, by occasional councils of representatives to consider matters of common interest, would leave untouched the distinctive features of any denomination, would call for no yielding of principles, and would ask only for a mutual recognition of each other as Christian bodies. It would not require a discussion of the question whether either one was or was not completely organized.

Its advantages would be at least two-fold. First, it would show to the world the unity of Christians in Christian truth and life. Secondly, it could practically consider the great missionary problems which press upon the Church of Christ. The occupation of lands, the wise use of means, the best methods of operation, could be discussed by a body of delegates in a manner which cannot be done by the correspondence of missionary boards. Is it too much to hope that the Christian spirit may soon begin to realize, even if but partially, something of a method plainly so advantageous? The Council certainly thought that such a progressive step was desirable, and it put itself upon record as ready to co-operate in the movement.

[One scene in the late Council in London will long be remembered. It was Dr. Quint standing on the platform beside the chairman, Dr. Dale, and answering questions in reference to our Congregational polity and usage put to him from all parts of the house. Elaborate papers had been presented by Dr. Ross of Michigan and from the pen of Dr. Quint himself. The whole subject of Congregational polity was fairly before the house. Dr. Quint stood there as the acknowledged leader and representative of New England Congregationalism. It was the opportunity of a lifetime, and it was well improved. Our English and colonial friends learned more of the true spirit of Congregationalism in that half hour than all they had ever known before. I think this is no exaggeration. The ready, clear, and instant answer to every point seemed to satisfy each inquirer.

It was no small pleasure to some of us to watch the varying expressions of Dr. Dale's face — Dr. Dale, the recognized leader and master spirit of English Congregationalism, sitting at the feet of Dr. Quint, asking questions with the rest, and expressing his assent by a nod and a generous smile, as point after point was met. That opportunity paid Dr. Quint for all the weariness and suffering incident to illness on his journey. It was the well-earned triumph of years of study and observation. The instruction then and there given to an appreciative and receptive audience will tell upon the future of our denomina-

It Means Federation.

tion in the mother country, will help Independency to its majority in Congregationalism, and to a just sense of its right to be as an honored branch of the church catholic. This alone was worth the holding of the Council. — Rev. N. G. CLARK, D. D.]

How Shall I Understand?

DANIEL WEBSTER has been quoted as saying, "We do not understand the arithmetic of heaven." I do not believe that he ever said it. He had too clear a mind to allow him to entertain such a ridiculous sentiment. It would be absurd to suppose that a territorial difference of locality in the universe of God made any difference in the law of numbers. If twelve apostles left this world for heaven they counted just twelve persons when they reached heaven, and in heaven they are now precisely twelve as a schoolboy would count them. Four and twenty elders before the throne are just as many as twenty-four elders in our list of ministers on the earth. No amount of sophistry nor any pretence of ignorant humility can change these facts.

How are we to understand the statements in the blessed Word of God? When I was a boy I somehow got impressed with the idea that it would be presumptuous to think that the language of the Bible had a natural meaning. Being divine I thought its words must be taken out of their ordinary use. I am not sure but that this impression was largely due to the peculiar definitions often made by certain theologians. The word "imputing," for instance, is an illustration of the pernicious and perplexing transformation from a real to an unreal meaning. That there must be some subtle understanding of Bible words seemed to be necessary to their sacredness. That there should be the same standard of right and wrong in heaven and on earth seemed too daring a thought. Even that life in Bible times was the same as life now, that homes then had the same affections as homes now, that the hearts of the ancient people were the same in nature as hearts now, could hardly be thought of. All this made the Bible an unreal book. Its meaning was greatly obscured, its sweetness greatly lost. Not all people have been so troubled, but many have been, possibly some who read what I am now writing.

First of all we should remember that it is God's purpose, in his Word, to reveal truth. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." Yes, but it is not his glory to conceal when he professes to reveal. He conceals in a rude plant, but when the beauty of the cactus is unfolded then the revelation is glory. Now if the Lord intended to reveal truth he had to use words in revealing that truth, and those words had to be such that we can understand them, and we cannot understand them unless they have the meaning in which we always use them.

Therefore we must attach our ordinary understanding to God's blessed words. Not that we exhaust their meaning in extent but we comprehend the nature thereof. Not that we comprehend some things which are merely hinted at, but these things are not revealed. Not that we understand and

define the infinite, for that is a contradiction in terms. There is very little herein to affect our lives. But when we read of righteousness it means righteousness, and that is the same here that it was in Eden and is in heaven, and the standard of judgment at the last great day must be just the same in kind as in men's consciences here. When we read of love it is love, no way different in essence among the redeemed in heaven than it was, so far as it was pure, among those redeemed when they were upon the earth, and therefore the people of heaven must be those whose hearts were hearts of love when here below. There cannot be two standards varying in substance in the dominion of God. Heaven and earth are one, law and gospel are one, the human and divine are one — in all the substance of truth. A common language in the Word of God expresses the ideas common to both.

It does not follow, however, that what is wrong in us would be wrong in God. If the particular wrong were essentially wrong in all beings then God could not do in that case what we could not do. But that is mere tautology. God's nature does not allow him to be unjust, and we know what the word unjust means, and it is useless for any one to try to make us believe that God would do something which we know would be unjust. We tell the man who tries it that he is blaspheming God; else we should lose our faith. But from a statement that what would be wrong in us would be wrong in God it would be very easy to deceive ourselves. It is not true. What would be wrong in a boy of fifteen years might not be wrong in his father. It depends upon relative positions and duties. What is wrong in one man is not necessarily wrong in another; it may depend upon position. It is wrong, for instance, for a man to go into the house of another and take away his goods; no, it is not wrong when the man who does it is empowered and ordered as an official by law to take the goods for satisfying just and righteous demands. It is wrong for a man to seize another and deprive him of his liberty; no, it is not wrong, for the man seized is a criminal who must be securely confined. If we rise higher, it is wrong for one to deprive a child of life, but Christian faith says that it is not wrong for God in his providence to take the little child out of this life into heaven, for it is his child. Let us humbly remember that they Governor of all the earth may and must do what in us would be criminal, and that in doing it he is holy, loving, and good.

One Aspect of Christian Liberty.

HERESY trials, so called, are not popular. They seem to assail the right of every man to frame and hold religious opinions without dictation from others. Every person is responsible solely to God so far as his religious views are concerned. No man can require another to believe anything, nor can any number of men acquire by association any more power than a single person possessed. You cannot hear the sound of an hundred cannon fired together any farther off than you can hear the sound of any one of the guns fired alone. This does not mean that one may rightfully believe what he pleases, for he is responsible to God, but he is not responsible

to man. Heresy trials appear to infringe upon this principle. A natural sympathy is awakened for one who is accused of heresy, and an appeal to sustain the spirit of progress finds a ready answer.

May we not sometimes mistake the question? Are we sure that the right of private judgment is certainly assailed in every charge of want of conformity to some standards? With no sympathy for such trials, and with no faith in their efficiency, I think we should, in any such case, ascertain the precise point at issue and judge fairly those who feel obliged to press obligations to pledged standards.

A trial fresh in mind, whose details I do not care to review, may deserve careful consideration. It is easy to say that its result was a violation of Christian liberty, an exercise of tyranny, a bar to progress, and a defiance to the spirit of the age. With certain premises and conditions omitted it is easy to show that it was all these. But is it just and wise to omit all these premises and conditions? Whether there was a neglect of due attention to certain minor methods and formalities in the course of the proceedings, I am not prepared to discuss. Everybody knows that, with the most punctilious observance of every discoverable semicolon in the law, the principle at issue would have been precisely the same and a decision against the respondent would have been equally denounced. The great question was far above an obscure medley of rules and forms; the decision upon which rules, however, reached by an overwhelming majority of able and learned men, it is as fair to presume was correct as to presume it was incorrect. Men readily evade main issues by hiding in a cloud of smoke, and smoke is very cheaply raised by burning very cheap twigs. The real issue was whether the Presbyterian Church was blameworthy for insisting that its ministers should conform to the standards of the church in their official teachings. Could the church which gave the man his official authority to teach determine that it would withdraw that official authority in case he ceased to meet the expressed terms upon which the church gave him its sanction — terms to which he had voluntarily pledged himself? If the church does this, no matter by what methods, the act is the supposed grievance against Christian liberty. It must be remembered that the church had reserved to itself the right to decide whether the minister had or had not ceased to be in harmony with its standards, and the minister had knowingly agreed to this form of government.

The Presbyterian Church is an association wherein membership is purely voluntary. This association has adopted certain rules and standards as essential conditions of membership. It devoutly believes these standards to be according to the Word of God. When it affirms "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God," the meaning cannot be mistaken. The Scriptures must be inerrant because they are the Word of God. It invites to its ministry only such as accept these standards, and it plainly puts a bar at its door against all others. It invades nobody's Christian liberty when it limits its invitation to persons who can conform to its conditions. Any man living within the territorial bounds of a presbytery can preserve his religious liberty by staying outside of the Presbyterian fold if his conscience objects to the Presbyterian standards, and any member who finds himself getting out of

harmony with his surroundings can readily withdraw. The real question is whether the true principle of religious liberty demands that one may, without molestation, teach doctrines contradictory to those of the church which admitted him upon his assent to those doctrines. I confess to much sympathy with the majority who were in the painful dilemma which confronted them. They had to decide between loyalty to the standards of their church and a dislike to appear despotic or ungenerous.

We ought to remember that they could not avoid the issue. It was forced upon them. The church was boldly challenged by theories and assertions which it is hard for any reader to think are admissible by the Presbyterian standards. Public teachers of such theories would not be and could not be silent. To insist that religious liberty means the right to hold and teach doctrines the opposite of those to which it is supposed one had promised conformity, and still remain within their fold, is not calculated to promote true progress. I do not say that this has been done in any particular case, but I do say that we should not be mystified by the words religious liberty, or imagine that such liberty is an issue when it is not.

But trials for heresy always have one remarkable effect. They sow the alleged erroneous doctrines broadcast over the land. A relative of mine, in his old age, although past labor, thought it would be an excellent work to pull up the beautiful, but detestable, white weed which was growing along the roadside. He did it well, and to perfect his work he buried it in the great muck-bed. The farm next year was thereby thoroughly covered with white weed.

Wasting Ammunition.

RELIGIOUS activities need to be governed by common sense. Men engaged in them should so far get outside of routine channels as to get a glimpse of the actual movements of the church as well as the drift of religious thought. Even the question of methods continually demands examination. A few years ago we heard an official upon a society platform say that the officials were taking the same course and following the same methods which had been in use for the fifty years past. He appealed triumphantly to this absolute unchangeableness as an evidence of wisdom. But if there is a single business house that has not changed any of its business methods during the past half century, it is certainly in an insolvency court. If there is a religious corporation which has grown from a small business and a limited territory to great expenditures and relations with all the world, and yet has retained the original, narrow method of managing its affairs, it is certainly time that sensible business men should reconstruct its form of organization. That it does not fail is due to the fact that it has a convenient source of supply in the contributions of the benevolent. Of course, it is extremely difficult for persons imbedded for many years in some one system to imagine that there are any other methods possible, and probably it would not be wise to ask such to try any change.

It is sometimes hard to see that circumstances change and that such a change makes old methods useless. Or there may be a mistake as to the point demand-

Wasting Ammunition.

ing attention. History tells us that when the Earl of Warwick and Edward IV. were to fight a decisive battle at Barnet, four hundred years ago, Warwick spent the night in throwing his artillery shot into a field where he thought the king's troops lay but which was absolutely vacant. The king craftily encouraged this mistake and took the time so to mass his forces as to secure a crushing victory in the next morning's mists. The church has not always been free from this blunder. It has kept firing at vacancy. It demolishes extinct heresies. Frankly, what is the use of firing away the bulk of our shot at the present time upon the ghost of a dead hypothesis regarding the opportunity of the heathen in the next world? I mean by this the fact, patent to most people, that that speculation has ceased to interest our churches; that its want of vitality was speedily seen; that it had nothing to offer as an addition to the old truth; and that it had not the slightest practical value to a heathen who never heard of it. Whatever there was of it died some years ago. We try to make it appear that the thing still lives by insisting that somebody shall endeavor to define the indefinable ghost so that we may pour hot shot through it. Why waste our shot? You cannot hit a ghost. In the meantime, while we keep up this attempt to make people fear a trouble which has passed by, the real danger has had all the more chance to intrench itself. The more we magnify the future probation guesswork by paying it any respectable attention the longer we protract the time when a few individuals may continue to think it worth minding. The speculation is practically dead.

Every schoolboy knows that nearly three hundred years ago one Guy Fawkes placed in the hired basement of the Parliament House fagots and barrels of powder with the intent to blow up the English Commons. It was discovered the night before Parliament was to open. Ever since that time, the day before a new Parliament assembles, a stalwart force goes through the basement to see if any Guy Fawkes has smuggled fagots and barrels of powder under the floors. The pompous farce will probably be kept up till the end of time. It is a fair illustration of the method which challenges with dead hypotheses every young man who wishes to preach the gospel, as if he were a Guy Fawkes placing combustible explosives under the platform of the Christian Church.

But what goes on in the meanwhile? Attention is diverted from grave issues. Petty speculations are trumped up to divide the Christian forces. Men who could stand together against the common evil are forced into antagonisms. If I believed that what was called "the doctrine" of a future probation of the heathen had any force to-day, or that its discussion was viewed by our churches with anything but weariness, I might write in a different vein. But it is as well for us to see that, outside of official circles, the fear of it is as dead as Guy Fawkes.

What are the issues of to-day? The great predominant one is that of the Bible itself. It is not a question of the interpretation of a few isolated sentences, but it is whether we have any authoritative revelation to be interpreted. Christian common sense may be trusted in the long run with a fair understanding of the Scriptures. But are there any Holy Scriptures? The last few years have exhibited a movement of the most rapid character toward a

reconstruction of the whole argument for and against the real character and binding authority of revelation. This movement has been largely silent. Its force has been greatly left to itself, while Christian attention has been diverted to speculative questions on minor points. In some forms these minor points demanded attention for a time, but the great and absorbing topics now before Christian people are vital. Is it wise to be diverted from them by superficial wrangling on extinct issues?

I am afraid that some readers will be disturbed by this writing. They cannot conceive that a question which a few years ago excited great attention is not just as important to-day as it was then. But let them ask themselves whether it has not lost its life. Let them consider the rude disturbances going on in other denominations as to the very foundations of revealed religion. Let them notice the drift of scientific methods, dangerous as well as useful, in their application to all supposed truth. Let them ask whether the idea itself of the supernatural is not being denied in new Christian philosophies. Let them at least feel that the churches cannot afford to divide and be split into hostile camps on useless questions or mere methods. If we are to come to any near religious convention or corporate meeting with a spirit of fighting over dead issues and attempting to re-define relative positions, or to establish an armed truce between factions, or to distribute proportionate strength between wings, both of which ought to be clipped, the cause of our Master will suffer. We do not want compromise, but we do want comprehensiveness of all that it true and good.

It is in one of Verne's books, is it not, the story of a great astronomer who went off to the frozen regions with a party to a spot which he sought, whereon to take observations of certain heavenly bodies. They found the desired location defined by latitude and longitude. The astronomer set up his instruments and all went well for a time. Then he became disturbed. He denounced the mariner who led the party. The fact was, as readers will remember, that the location had been ignorantly made on an immense field of apparently firm ice and not upon the continent. The mistake was vital. Of what use were observations from points on silently and slowly moving ice? Is it worth while for Christian people to let the foundations, the inspired revelation of God, glide away while they are contenting themselves with taking observations from an unsettled faith?

Forms.

Two religious festivals are close together each year. Forefather's Day comes on the 21st of December and Christmas Day comes on the 25th of December. The former recalls Plymouth in Massachusetts, the latter recalls Bethlehem in Judea. The former commemorates the birth of American Congregationalism, the latter commemorates the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

People naturally turn to some specific thing for observance. It appears to be a want which must be met. If one has a prejudice against Christmas Day, a prejudice inherited from the fathers, he substitutes Forefathers' Day. The more loyally, as a Congregationalist, he abjures Christmas, the more he

Forms.

celebrates the landing of the Pilgrims. It is a change of date from the twenty-fifth to the twenty-first. He laughs to scorn the pieces of the true cross, alleged to be preserved in Europe, and he believes in chests and chairs and desks enough to freight a Cunarder, all of which he is positively assured came over in the little Mayflower; and he reverently believes in the teapot at Plymouth, brought over in that same vessel thirty years before tea was ever found in England, at which time it sold for thirty dollars a pound.

The same instinct has occasionally found utterance in the names of some of our churches. St. John's Church is a Methodist church in my own city. Our own people do not believe in naming churches for any one of the apostles; so some of them named a new church the Belknap Church, in memory of a minister who lived there in the time of the Revolution, but who, unfortunately, died an Arian. So also the Episcopal people have a St. John's Church in one of the Boston districts; and our people, scrupling at the name of one of the twelve, have a Winthrop Church there, in commemoration of an eminent colonial governor of great piety and wisdom. There is also a St. Mary's Church in another Boston district; and we, who think such names tend to the worship of saints, have a Maverick Church there in honor of a zealous Church of England layman. In still another Boston district St. Ann's Church is Episcopal; and, disbelieving in Bible names, we prefix Eliot to one of our churches — and, indeed, we have three Eliot churches on our list, all named for the Apostle Eliot. The inherited fear of giving human names to churches seems to be confined to a dread of the apostles. Sometimes we become less individual, and then we have a Church of the Pilgrims, so as to take in the whole Mayflower. This is all in the line of the natural tendency toward the memory of good men and holy days as aids to devotion. But I am not sure that Belknap and Winthrop, and Maverick and Phillips (who has two churches in this neighborhood), and Harvard (who also has two churches) and Payson, and Russell and Winslow, are less open to objection than Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Thomas, Peter, and Paul — or even Ann or Mary. I think, however, that the fashion of naming our churches for men is fading away. At best it was a poor device, out of keeping with the dignity of a Christian church.

Pure spirituality is an exalted dream. But, conceived as standing alone, it is impossible. There must be something in which it inheres. To destroy substance in the attempt to establish spirituality is like destroying a flower thereby to establish as a distinct thing the beauty which the flower exhibited. The attempt which various generations have witnessed to get rid of forms and rites and ceremonies, because such were supposed to destroy spirituality, has always been well meant There has often been great provocation for it. It is easy to lapse into formality of observance, when the observance in its origin was natural and useful. But the attempt to destroy, even under such provocation, has itself failed in doing more than reduce observances to a minimum. Our forefathers threw aside great cathedral music as being a form; but their own doggerel version of the Psalms was itself only a form, and a very poor one, in which to express their devotional praise. They abolished the order of worship of their ancestral church as being formalism, but the order which they adopted was just as regular and fixed as was its elaborate predecessor. They abolished

Christmas and exalted Plymouth Rock. Human nature had to have something to reverence.

In my boyhood there would sometimes be a public notice that some minister of the Society of Friends would be present at a meeting of which the time and place were given. I believe that such a notice never said that the minister would speak at such a meeting. In answer to my inquisitiveness I was told that the minister could not venture to promise to speak, because he could not tell whether the Spirit would give him a message. But I wondered how he could be sure that the Spirit would send him to that meeting. Still further, I could not see, nor do I now see, that the Quaker sermon had any more spirituality or power than a sermon of our own godly minister regularly expected every Sunday forenoon. Nor do I think that the experiment of the Friends, many of whom I regard with profound affection and esteem, in attempting to withdraw from all forms, has produced any better type of piety than is found among those who avail themselves of the common methods of worship. The leaders of the Salvation Army exhibit as much spirituality as the followers of George Fox.

If we rightly consider the matter, forms are merely the shapes assumed by realities. The form of a brook is made by the water of the brook in its natural descent. The form of a tree is precisely what the vital force of the tree has made it to be. These forms have not been invented. They have not been made by theories. Whether some particular form — in creeds, in the expressions of worship, or in times of observance — is natural and fitted for human experiences and activities is a question of fact in each case. If, after having come naturally into existence, such forms are merely molds into which experience must be forced, they are unnatural and, to a certain degree, inadequate. I use the term, inadequate, purposely, because there are no forms having had a good origin which do not afford some help. Much human life cannot go alone. It might be a desirable thing if every person could withdraw into his own thought, and, divested of every outward connection, be able to walk alone. But this is not human life. God Himself gave one day in seven to be sacred for special spiritual communion. Christ Himself gave to His disciples a definite prayer for example and use. He established two sacred ordinances, each an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Such was our Master's deference to the human longing for something which it could grasp. Nothing beyond these can be ordered by any authority, but anything appropriate in the line of their development which helps Christian devotion, thought, and faith is within the realm of Christian liberty.

Religion without Theology.

In the report of a sermon recently preached by a minister reputed to be quite liberal, I was surprised to find the statement that faith is no more dependent upon dogma than sight is dependent upon the laws of optics. The report appears to have been made by a person skilled in such work, and therefore is not open to a suspicion of incompetency or carelessness. I was surprised at the parallel, which seems to fetter faith beyond what most of us can allow.

Religion without Theology.

It is always safe to administer kicks and cuffs to dogma. Dogma has a terrific sound. Most people would perhaps find it hard to define it, but it is something terrible. Possibly the most innocent meaning is that of an asserted authoritative statement of doctrine, which its supporters insist have been settled for all time and is absolutely binding. It is, perhaps, set forth by great ecclesiastical bodies, but it is of human production.

The statement which I have taken from the reported abstract first brings up the relation between sight and the laws of optics. Now sight — that is, the power of seeing — does not depend for its existence upon the laws of optics. But that power is, of course, absolutely limited and controlled in its use by the laws of optics. No person can see in any other way than in perfect accord with those laws. But the statement referred to parallels faith and dogma with sight and the laws of optics. Its implication is clear that the one is as dependent upon its connected law as the other. Faith is then dependent upon dogma for its exercise, although dogma is a purely human structure. This exalts dogma to the same commanding position over the exercise of faith as the laws of optics have over the exercise of sight. If I had not found this in a liberal production I should have disputed it. Perhaps it is reactionary. But I would not go so far. I should prefer to say, if I were to make the parallel, that the exercise of faith is controlled by the laws of truth.

Now, on the other hand, there is quite a fashionable drift, in limited sections of thought, not only to set aside dogma, but to regard all consideration of God's nature and ways as needless so far as religion is concerned. One great writer said, some time ago, that "the idea of a God is not necessary to religion." Not long ago I heard a preacher say that no theology ought to be preached, only religion. We have seen it argued that religion can be taught in schools and theology excluded, and that this would be a satisfactory adjustment of a very vexing question. The theory that religion can be taught with theology thrown out of existence is a pet notion just now. It sounds very broad and generous and kind.

Is it worth while to throw theology away, in the expectation that religion is thereby to become more palatable? What is theology? Simply the story of God's nature, attributes, law, providential government. It includes His holiness, justice, goodness, love. It contains His mercy through Jesus Christ. Now, what is religion? The relation of man to his God, his obligations to God, his duties toward God, and his duties to his fellow-men as required by God, and, especially, by the very etymology of the word, his reunion with God. I have summarized these statements out of dictionary definitions, so as to avoid professional science. Now, can any one tell how religion can be left after demolishing the idea of God? How can one be taught his duties toward God with God dropped out? How can he be taught that the law of God is to be obeyed if he is forbidden to know that there ever was any God to give any law? How is he to learn that sin against God has any evil in it, and how any mercy from a merciful God can be promised him, or how any divine spiritual life can come through a dying and risen Redeemer given by God, if God Himself be eliminated from all thought of sin, and mercy, and life?

To say that the idea of a God is not essential to religion is to say that the

idea of a sun is not essential to sunshine. Particularly would it be hard to ask any teacher to teach sunshine and exclude the sun.

Why should we abandon the great word "theology"? If it has been made narrow, arbitrary, tyrannical, proud, we can give to it a noble meaning, — the study of the great truths concerning God. We can observe in such study meekness, reverence, and charity. But religion without theology is a tree without a root. But we need the elevating and strengthening power of the true knowledge of God, such as comes both by intellectual thought and spiritual understanding. Religious teaching needs the invigorating power of a constant reference to the supreme, the infinite God. Without that we can have sentimentalism, but we shall lack strength.

A theological professor, whom I once good-naturedly charged with having materially changed the tone of his lectures, would not admit the correctness of my statement, but he did finally say: "When I began to teach I had to emphasize the man side of truth, but times have so changed that I have felt compelled to give the greater emphasis to the God side."

The Fundamental Question in the Church To-day.

John A. Andrew well said that our army fought the battle of Bull Run as a collection of town meetings. The army meant well, but it did not know how to obey. There could have been a difficulty back of that ignorance. The first question was not whether the flag was to be restored all over the defiant States, but whether we had an army to do it with. By such an army I mean one which believed that the Constitution was the supreme law of the land, and that the supreme law, thereof, was not the *débris* of a debating society. It must be an army which knew the orders coming from an external authority as absolute authority, and not as welling up out of the depths of unfathomable souls in the field. It meant an army wherein the drummer boy beat his drum and the fifer blew his fife to the music given them, without pausing for some echo of the eternal harmonies to flow into the drum-sticks and fifes, or, rather, for their own throbbing souls to originate the chords of inspiration. An army was needed in which orders for movements did not require the introspection of the teamsters looking for absolute truth which should crystallize into concrete and visible forms and justify the advice from headquarters to put the horses to the wagons.

Nor was there any different principle applicable to colonels and generals. They had no right to consider whether any particular section in the Constitution was wise or unwise. No section derived its validity from its concurrence with their own consciousness. It was all law, and supreme law, in every part thereof. The rebellious States were the ones which violated this fundamental truth. But the rebellious States made themselves consistent when in framing a constitution they provided that any State could nullify any obnoxious part of any law passed by their congress.

The same question, I cannot but think, is the present and pressing question

The Fundamental Question in the Church To-day.

in the church. The church believes that there is a need of revelation from God, a gospel which did not and could not originate within men's souls. The revelation must be absolutely authoritative, whether in any particular respect it meets or does not meet our approval. If there be a gospel of salvation for a fallen race it must come from outside of that race, and not be produced by it. Its characteristics, its parts, must be revealed, not evolved. It must come to the man before it can be in the man. It must be a message to him before it can be a life in him. If it be a gospel of Christ it must be precisely what Christ brought to the world, exactly what He brought. Is this admitted?

The church admits, in a general sense, the authority of this record. Now the question comes whether it may submit the authority of any particular part thereof, not to fair, scholarly decision, but to the standard of some inner consciousness which the individual sets up to determine whether that particular selection is or is not spurious. Instead of scholarship there would then be a standard of vapory notions, which would not only result in a medley of visionary speculations, but would necessarily hurt the working power of the church.

This method simply repudiates, as a part of the revelation, what the man assumes that his own spiritual wisdom condemns. He undertakes to declare what ought to be the features of a message of mercy to a sinful world, instead of receiving it as God gives it. There is a vast difference between the spiritual understanding of revealed truth, to which we all hold, and the striking out of revealed truth itself. The church has its strength in believing that what Christ taught is to be implicitly received, and that what Christ ordered is to be implicitly obeyed. It may be convenient to assert, if I do not like a particular teaching, that therefore that teaching never could have been Christ's, and, if I do not like a particular command, that therefore that command is undoubtedly interpolated. This is precisely what the inner consciousness test means.

A second source of weakness is in the assumption that, when Christ's teaching is too well authenticated for even the consciousness to set it aside as spurious, Christ may be boldly declared to have been mistaken in what one dislikes. I suppose that the result of admitting such right of criticism as to Christ's teaching or His beliefs, in weakening the power of the church, would be too evident to need discussion. If Christ was mistaken in a single point His divine authority is ended. Mistaken in one point, a doubt is thrown upon every thing which He said or did. He no longer has the words of eternal life.

I think I will recall our twenty drummers and fifers. They used to give us beautiful music. Every one knows how the wearied and footsore men upon a march used to start into life and forget their weariness when music was ordered. But I imagine our drummers and fifers, when a piece of music was given to them, to begin their criticisms. They look into their own consciousness and evolve sublime truth. One instantly says that the inner life is all that can originate true music, and he objects to this mechanical way of doing things. A second has ponderous doubts whether the alleged author of the piece really wrote it, and he prefers what he calls a truly genuine production. A third thinks that there are parts in this piece which evidence a mixed character and require expurgation. A fourth thinks that the author was mis-

taken in some of his notes as being unmusical. Sixteen others vary from each other as to the really genuine and non-genuine, the inspirational, and the mechanical. All are actuated by the highest conscientiousness and the loftiest and sublimest conceptions of the harmonies of heaven, and they proceed to play accordingly. I wonder how much vigor and life the wearied soldiers would get out of this jargon. And the drummers and the fifers would be speedily impressed with the conviction that they were to obey orders.

I think our best evangelists are doing a great work in the matter now before us. All of them believe in the recorded revelation. They quote Christ's words — and they quote Paul's words and John's words and Peter's words, as of men having the promised guidance of the Holy Ghost — like men who believe in them. They quote them with power, and, after all, the people who relish Christian preaching relish Bible preaching.

Who Says It?

A FELLOW-STUDENT of mine in college wrote in autograph books something to the effect (I wish I had the language) that truth is to be received from whatever source it comes, but error rejected though given by an oracle. It was a favorite sentence of that student. It sounded well. It implied superior wisdom and great breadth. As I was a boy it strongly impressed me. As a man I see that it was a platitude. Perhaps its real intent was to separate absolutely a thing that is said from the person saying it, lest one be swayed by some authority. But, if so, there is something to be said as to the importance of knowing who says things.

First of all, it is important to know whether the person who speaks is qualified to speak. When I used to hear Agassiz, his name carried weight. It was presumptive evidence that in his department he could and would give me the exact facts. If a schoolboy had undertaken to contradict Agassiz, I think the identity of the scientist would have been of prime importance. I should greatly prefer to hear Edison concerning incandescent lighting than to hear a salesman discoursing in a lamp store. I should much prefer the opinion of my friend, Prof Thayer, as to the exact meaning of a sentence in the Greek Testament, rather than its exposition from a travelling manipulator of a student's Bible and a lead pencil. "Who says it" is vastly important in reference to the probability of correctness. If some statement of religious experience is made by an aged saint just ripe for heaven, the knowledge had through a long and consistent life of faith, prayer, and goodness has mighty power because of the person who gives the testimony. The probabilities of truth depend vastly upon the qualifications of the one who speaks. Hereby one may readily see the importance of listening to the best recognized authorities. Most people cannot afford the time necessary to examine and investigate the multitude of matters coming before the mind. Life is so short that such investigation is absolutely impossible outside of those few vital matters which every person must investigate. Even in investigation, where contradictory statements appear, it is wise to begin the examination by inquiring, as to each assertion, who says it.

Who Says It?

To know who says some particular thing will often cast light upon the reasons for its shape. An anonymous assault in a religious paper upon some institution would be readily understood if the author's name had been appended. Had he some personal grievance? Had the tides swept away and left him stranded? One might insist that the only question is whether the charges are true. But if this assertion were admitted the truth would be much more readily ascertained if we knew the author and understood his motives. Though he be perfectly honest in his opinions his personality, if known, might throw a flood of light upon his statement. It is on this account that some writers sign fictitious names to their assaults.

It is possible that the force of editorials would sometimes be better understood if the particular writer appended his name. Of course, editorial control assumes the responsibility of all its utterances, and yet the knowledge of actual authorship might explain the coloring sometimes. For instance, a purely literary paper, in reviewing Dr. Dunning's recent book on Congregationalism, evidently dissents, though not unkindly, from his treatment of the Unitarian division. The criticism is, of course, purely literary, yet if it be understood that the editor is a Unitarian minister the criticism naturally appears in a different light. The same book, reviewed in a great periodical, was objected to for its chapter making Congregationalism the practice of the early churches. The review was, of course, in the name of the paper itself, but the criticism of that chapter could hardly have been different if the religious editor of the paper is an Episcopalian. A Baptist paper naturally objects to the reflections upon Roger Williams. A Presbyterian paper speaks very favorably of the work, but takes exception to the chapter on apostolic Congregationalism, believing that the early practice was Presbyterian. "Who says it" must often account for the things said.

"Who says it" is often of peculiar importance when different persons use the same words in different senses. This is particularly the case in religious utterances. A statement may sound substantially correct. Then why not accept it, regardless of its origin? If it is true, what matters its authorship? Simply because the use of the terms may be delusive, and the deductions which are to follow, by and by, may be absolutely untrue. I wish to know what is one's real belief on a broad scale. Sometimes men have used the words "regeneration," "atonement," "divinity of Christ," and the like, with no intention of dishonesty, and yet have held general beliefs entirely inconsistent with what these words would be understood by ordinary hearers to imply. What is said sounds well, but who says it has a great bearing upon what it means. It is not unreasonable to interpret the utterance by the man. The man may be a safe leader, and he may not. He may be a judicious thinker, and he may not. He may be a sound reasoner, and he may not. If one's general drift is reckless it is well to know it. Whatever he says must necessarily be considered in that light. This is the only path of wisdom and of safety.

Now and then, it comes in my way to hear sermons. I am sometimes struck by the quotations which preachers make from different authors. In a majority of cases quotations are a sign of poverty. But I am surprised when a preacher quotes some high-sounding sentence from some disbeliever in Christian faith,

as though that disbeliever was authority for Christian men in a Christian sermon. To thus magnify such an author, and to give him standing before a Christian people may appear to show much reading and great liberality, but it is hardly edifying. When an approving quotation is made as having authority, it is well to know who says it, and whether the minister intends to commend the unbelieving writer to his people as a safe guide in religious things. If he does not so intend he ought not to make the quotation.

Pure Truth.

It has been a disparaging remark, so common as to be trite, that any person can get from the Bible anything that he wants. It is quite remarkable that while the allegation is substantially correct the objector does not see that what he censures is evidence of its richness and value. The range of the written word is so vast, it contains such profundity of thought, it includes such marvellous variety of details, that any person can take at pleasure some one specific feature or fact in revelation and, excluding all others, make of his selection a dogma if he wishes a dogma, a fling if he wishes a fling. A dishonest person can do this dishonestly. A partisan theologian can pick his texts. The objector is right. One can find in the Bible what he wants to believe, either by its direct statement or by some respectable inference from a direct statement. But the method may not be fair or honest, and the opportunity is simply an evidence of the wealth of the Word of God. The wheat field is a blessing from God, although the grain can be turned into poison.

But my thought runs toward the practical experience of Christian life. Are Christians ever perplexed because there are such diverse teachings and such varied precepts? Are they disturbed by differing representations of the character and government of God? Do they sometimes ask themselves the elementary question, why even the four great writers give differing records of the same course of events, and why one omits what another inserts and inserts what another omits? Would not a divine revelation be exact in its statements, present facsimiles of phraseology if two or more pens were employed in writing and, indeed, give but one consolidated and authorized history? No! The opposite is its glory. It is a living revelation coming through living men and meeting the living wants of endlessly varying human life. It touches that life at every conceivable point and enters into its vitality, and here comes in the glory of the fact that any one can draw from the Bible anything which he wants. Whatever his own moral condition may be there is something applicable to it, either Sinai or Calvary. Whatever may be his need there is something to supply it, either strength to the waiting paralytic or the pillar of luminous cloud to the moving host.

I do not trouble myself with abstractions. They belong to the philosophers and metaphysicians, and I gladly leave such things to those wise men. What is pure truth? I do not worry myself to frame an image of an abstraction. I suppose that some persons have an idea of what sweetness is apart from all substance, but it is easier for me — I admit my feebleness — to think of some-

Pure Truth.[1]

thing which is sweet, and there are various flavors in sweetness without impairing its purity. Doubtless, thinkers conceive of beauty totally separated from anything which is beautiful, but I content myself with looking at beautiful things and thinking how beautiful they are; beautiful things differ greatly, but each beauty may nevertheless be pure, and therefore I admire the beautiful all the more. Is there pure beauty apart from that which is beautiful? That depends, I suppose, upon definitions. Is there truth apart from that which embodies it? So far as Biblical truth is concerned I do not know how to get abstract truth. The Bible has not given it to me. It has given me facts which I believe. It has embodied God's law in statutes which I am to obey. It has declared principles which are to govern me. It has promised spiritual powers and supernatural guidance to the needy and the willing. I have not yet seen any chemical analysis which distils some ethereal, pure truth out of all substance, and even deprives it of the ether which makes it ethereal. Certainly I know of no imaginary something called truth evolved out of my consciousness to which I can summon the details of a historic revelation for my judgment on the divinity of each selected detail. If I were to assume that something, which I call my moral sense, is superior to authentic declarations of the Son of God, I must be very careful lest in my conceit I make myself foolish by substituting what would be better termed my moral nonsense.

Our Lord's revelation is none the less truth because it is concrete. He gives us facts. Most people understand truth because it is concrete. The Word of God is truth in that it is truthful. It has a higher range of meaning in that it reveals true, divine things. But now it does not follow that the truth is not pure truth when and because its statements have peculiarities beyond an abstract formula. "Seven angels" is truth as really as "seven" without the angels. Four writers may give real truth and yet differ in their representations. Each one looks at it from his own standpoint or shapes it for a certain distinct purpose or relates it through the medium of personal experiences. Yet each result is pure truth.

For instance, a traveller wishes for pure air. Well I remember the first time I saw the ocean. I was a boy then, and I went with my parents from an inland town, and I was full of eagerness to see the wonderful billows of which I had heard so much. As we came down toward the coast I began to hear the throb of the sea upon Hampton Beach and, though miles away, to perceive the saltness of the air. Was it pure air? Yes. The fact that the winds had caught up the spray of the sea and borne it inland did not make the air impure, it made it only the better for many an invalid. Lately I recalled on a country road Whittier's line,

"The wild brier blooms on Kittery's side,"

whose perfume he places in contrast with that of the salt air which came from Labrador. My country road was filled with the exquisite odor of the roadside plants. Was that country air less pure because of the perfume? Not far from this wild luxuriance the haymakers were busy. I sat in the shade of the trees and watched them. There was the rattle of the mowing machine, and near by workmen were spreading the partly cured hay in the sunshine, and

some of it lay in windrows, and not far off the preceding day's hay was being loaded and taken into the barns. The gentle wind was laden with the scent. Was the air impure because it distilled into itself this wonderful fragrance? And not far off were pine woods. Their lofty tops were swaying in the west wind.

Long ago did wise country people discover that the odor of the living pine trees had healing in it, and they learned that it was well to build near pine woods and good for certain invalids to breathe their air. I grieve to say that on the day when I thought these things I could hear the machinery of a distant, portable sawmill cutting into boards pine trees which had been felled. But even the cutter's ruthless work only freed the more the imprisoned perfume, which the air took up and brought to me. Was the air impure because thus endowed with richness? I will not complain if a scientific friend says that air is only a mechanical mixture of twenty-one parts of oxygen and seventy-nine of nitrogen and a touch of carbonic acid thrown in. But for God's purposes that air is pure which has no evil in it, and just as pure when the union of oxygen and nitrogen draws up the vapor of the sea or distils the subtle life of the sweetbrier, or absorbs the perfume of the new-made hay, or medicates itself from the rich exhalations of the pines.

For God's purposes that the truth be pure does not exclude from any part thereof the special characteristics of time and place and event and personality of writers and needs of those who listen. It is this variety of adaptation, always under the unchanging principles of God's governing purpose, which makes His revealed truth the source of supply for every want. But it is an inability of somebody to find affinity in some revealed things which makes him insist that those things cannot be divine. He is just as wise as would be a man who, never having left a rocky sea island, should insist that the air of what people called a pine forest could not be pure or healthful.

THE HOME AND FAMILY.

Begin Early.

It may be rash for me to write upon so trite a subject as the permanence of early impressions. But I see more and more its importance, and some need of suggestion. One of its most touching illustrations is as old as that story of David, when, in order of battle against the Philistines, the thirsty king recalled the water which he had drunk in his childhood, and said, "Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" And it is a new theme with every new motherhood bending over the cradle of the young child.

I recall a simple illustration which impressed itself upon my memory. It was an autumn night, past nine o'clock, in war days in the Southern land, when a mounted orderly came to me with a polite request from Gen. A. S. Williams, commanding our division, that I would come over at once to his quarters, half a mile distant. An invitation from a general has much force in it, and I was speedily in the saddle, and in five minutes more I dismounted at his tent. The general was a brave soldier, had served in Mexico, and had one of the kindest hearts I ever knew. He told me that a young man was to be shot the next day for desertion; that he was "shamming stupid," with some vague hope of reprieve, but that the surgeons had decided that he was entirely sane. "But he won't talk sensibly," said the general; "and I did n't want the fool to go to Hell that way, and, though he is n't in your brigade, I thought I would send for you, to see if you could get at him." I might say also that the bluff soldier had put an adjective before the word "fool," on which, however, "the recording angel dropped a tear."

I strolled along to the place where the man was sitting, with his ankles fastened together. I said nothing at first, that I might not excite his suspicion. He was heating water to make coffee. A burnt stick moving, his tin cup would have slipped, but I caught and replaced it. He looked up at me covertly, and said, in a gay tone, "Going home to New York to-morrow!" I sat down, and gradually tried to get him to talk sensibly, but he baffled me. He had been, however, as I learned from some of his stories, a waif in New York streets, apparently thoroughly reckless, sometimes a newsboy, sometimes something else. Whether he had any recollection of a mother, I could not make out. While telling something of his life, he would do it in a half stupid but chuckling air, and constantly throwing in, "Going to New York to-morrow!" The case seemed desperate. But something, I hardly knew what, made me suspect

that in his earliest days he had been under Roman Catholic influences, and yet it could not have been much after seven years of age. I tried an experiment. Taking a short stick in my hand, I said to him, abruptly, "Look here, what is that?" and as quick as thought, I drew a cross upon the ground. "The holy cross," he answered involuntarily, and in a perfectly natural tone. I added in the next breath, "And what happened on the cross?" "The blessed Jesus died for our sins." The sign of the cross, reverenced in his earliest childhood, had taken him off his guard. "Ah," said I, "you need n't sham any longer. You know you are to die to-morrow." "You have caught me," he said; and he gave up his folly. It was a notable case of the sudden awakening of an early impression in one who, as he told me, had not been in a church, or had the slightest thought of it, for sixteen or seventeen years. The Roman Catholic Church is wise. It knows the value of early training. The fitful clouds were still passing over the face of the moon, and the sentinels were walking their posts, when at midnight I went sadly back to my bivouac fire.

My most important suggestion is that no time is too early for beginning. I assume that every Christian home has its daily prayers and Scriptural reading. Let the unconscious babe be present. What can the child then know? Nothing, intellectually, perhaps. But that the child be in a good spiritual atmosphere is parallel with his being in a healthful, material atmosphere. Doubtless, little ones are impressed at a wonderfully early age by gentle and reverent tones, and by the subtle, spiritual magnetism from loving Christian souls. The babe may even be asleep, but if he smiles then in his sleep, is there any harm in the Irish thought that the angels are whispering to him? When the babe becomes conscious of surroundings, it is well that he should find himself listening to Scripture words, and in the influence of devout and tender prayers. If there are other children, let the babe hear their young voices in the reading and the prayer of the Lord. It may become a second nature to him. I fear that some delay these natural influences, waiting for mental development. Let the influences precede the development. Divine influences work upon the nature through sweeter and more profound faculties than the mere reasoning powers. The Christian mother will act wisely if she keeps the babe with the family in its sacredest hours. It cannot disturb a loving heart. This may in later years be the saving of a man, that his earliest impressions were of such a pure and religious character.

Perhaps I need not press the privilege of early teaching farther than to say that no one ought to be deluded by a theory that the child ought not to have fixed in his memory things which he cannot as yet understand. Let the truths be there in anticipation of the time when mental growth and the Holy Spirit shall want them. But it is important to name another need, which is that children should very early be found in the public worship of God; so early, indeed, that the child will not, in later years, remember its beginning. It may be a trial to sensitive mothers, but experience will soon bring a little child into quiet habits. He will early be impressed by some parts of the service, and he will grow up to regard attendance in church as a matter of course.

The question, how we can bring to the place of public worship the great numbers who rarely or never attend church, is continually discussed in our local and larger gatherings. It is a serious problem. But I have no hesitation

Begin Early.

in asserting that an alarming percentage of this number is made up of children of church-going parents — parents who are bringing up these children in neglect of public worship of God. If remonstrance is made, excuses are made. The children are too young to understand, or they will get fatigued, or they go to Sunday school, or their inclinations must not be forced; or, most decisive of all, the perennial and brilliant resource of the man who "now will not go to church at all, because he had to do it when he was a boy." If these reasons were good, they would simply be good reasons for doing incalculable harm to the children. But they are not good. They are merely pretexts to justify a lack of steady purpose in parents who do not appreciate the evil they are doing. The matter of church attendance should be so fixed that even the temporary whim of the child will feel that it is not open to discussion. But this requires a habit of attendance begun before he has any will in the matter. Nor are children to be left to believe that amusement and caprice are what they live for. Make church-going a privilege, but, if need be, make it a duty.

There are influences in the house of God which even a very young child is quite capable of feeling. No amount of Sunday-school teaching can make up for the loss of the reverent heed, and the earnest devotion, and the psalms of praise. Divine influences come in other ways besides logical disputations even in sermons, and affect the spiritual nature without mental processes. Every Sunday I hear the voices of children in the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, and of those, but little older, in the Gloria Patri, and in the alternate reading of psalms. Parents cannot afford to lose, by careless delay, the influences of public worship in the nurture of their children to become godly men and women. Two elements are involved in this: the impressions early made upon memory, and the almost unconscious developing by influences. Neither of these can be well disregarded. That even these may sometimes fail is reason only for greater faithfulness in using them.

I may be permitted to give another personal reminiscence. A little more than fifteen years ago I went with my father to his birthplace in the State of Maine. I had never been there before, and he had not been there for forty years. The whole family had been gone from that place during that time. He went to see, with other purposes, the wall and gate, and re-setting of stones of the old graveyard, which he had previously ordered. We stood, on his seventieth birthday, on the great, flat, stone doorstep of the house where he was born; but the house had fallen in. It was interesting to me to see how his memory brought back the scenes of his early childhood, and his reminiscences of the saintly mother, from whose instructions he had never, in all his life, departed. But I was especially impressed in our visit to an adjoining town at the home of the grandchildren of one of his uncles. While there my father alluded to the old spring on the farm. But the family knew of no spring. My father told where the spring must be found. The family said there was a wet place there, but they had never heard of any spring. We went, however, to the spot. My father decided where the spring had been nearly sixty years before, when he last drank from it, and proposed that they get tools and investigate. They did so. They found, in their labor, that stones had fallen in, matted sticks and roots had become interwoven, tufts of coarse grass had overgrown it, and the

water from under the little hill thus obstructed had worked off through oozy soil for many years. They opened the little spring again, and cut a channel for its use. The water began to flow, not clear, of course, but the next morning there was a steady supply of the crystal purity which not one there except my father knew to have existed. Memory thus asserts itself, and is it not true that the early springs of life, choked by years of worldly cares, ambition, or wrong, may, by the grace of God, be re-opened and flow with the simplicity of childhood's faith and love?

What Thanksgiving Implies.

When I was a boy Thanksgiving implied to us a remarkable day of feasting. I do not think that we knew anything about the origin of the day. I believe it is said that the Pilgrims at Plymouth, in one of their earliest years, set apart a special day of thanksgiving, because deliverance from starvation came by a well-laden vessel. They really thought that God sent that vessel. Next year they re-appointed the day, and so it came to be a usage, partly out of commemoration of the original deliverance, but mainly changing into a general Thanksgiving Day for harvests.

The old-fashioned Thanksgiving Day was a family festival. For a solitary man there was no life in it. Nor could it be thoroughly realized, I insist, in city life. That is, it could not have the genuine flavor. It wanted, and now wants, the old-fashioned New England home life, home manners and customs, and the old meeting-house. An Irishman writing home said: "It is a queer country over here. They have only three saints' days — St. Fast Day, St. Fourth of July, and St. Thanksgiving Day." He was quite right, for in my earliest school days our school-ma'am kept her private school straight through the year with the exception of those three days and Sundays. Christmas Day is not Thanksgiving Day, while it has its own, distinct advantage.

Thanksgiving Day was, and is naturally, a feast day, for it is a day commemorative of the harvests. Whom does it thank? The laws of nature? The rule of cause and effect? The steady movement of a well-oiled machinery, which oils itself and runs itself? Does it imply any superior intelligence anywhere? I suppose, if such profound questions had been suggested when I was a boy, even the old folks would have looked astonished. They really believed in God. But the boys and girls thought of nothing but the feasting. There were days of preparation — I refer only to the kitchen department. What flutterings there were in many a poultry yard! What piles of orchard products were put to use! What stores of pies and puddings were on hand! How the boys watched the preparations! At the proper time what roaring fires were built in the huge, brick ovens, which formed a part of huge chimneys in old-fashioned farm-houses! There never can be such cooking again as was had in those old ovens. It went to my heart when they demolished the old oven in the farmhouse where I was born, which stood on the site of the farmhouse in which my mother was born — the last-named house superseding the log house

What Thanksgiving Implies.

built by my grandfather on his purchase of wild forest land, which had had but one change of title from the time when Captain John Mason had his grants before 1630. Those ovens were essential to real New England home life.

My children will never eat such wonderful baked apples as my grandmother used to bake in that brick oven. She was one of the saints, and so was the other grandmother whose name her great-grandchild bears in her semi-mission work two thousand miles away from where the oven used to be. Those grandmothers believed that God sent the harvests, and that He was intelligent in His way of doing it, and equally that He sent His Bible for them to profit by. They had no question when they prayed but that they were praying to a fatherly God and not to a machine.

As to ovens, in war time we used to build them of brick, whenever we had opportunity, in winter quarters, the cooking was so much better. Sometimes the men dug holes in the ground and lined them with great stones, heated the stones to a white heat, put in kettles of food, covered the whole with a great, flat rock, and next morning found superb results. We used to read the Massachusetts Thanksgiving Proclamation each year, in our regiment, and have public worship (once it was out of doors in a snowstorm), and then have great dinners for all the men. It flavored of home.

But the home feasting was luxurious; and yet how simple and how little to the taste of pampered exquisites. I remember that one invariable breakfast dish on Thanksgiving Day, for my own special benefit, was fried chicken, and before my children were scattered abroad we always continued the fried chicken. Then in my boyhood there could be no dinner without roast turkey and chicken pie, with, of course, vegetables, sauces, and everything that could accompany either. No amount of puddings or varieties of pastry could allow the absence of pumpkin pie. That was the true New England dish. Why, the early Puritans used to trim boys' hair in what they called the pumpkin shell fashion. An empty half pumpkin shell was placed on the head and the scissors followed the line of the shell. By the way, I used to start a gas factory every Thanksgiving Day afternoon. The boys may like to learn how. Fill the bowl of a fresh clay pipe with walnut meat (you could n't eat all the walnuts nor the apples nor the pears), cover the bowl over with clay, place it clay downward on coals of fire, and an oily gas will soon come out of the stem of the pipe, which can be lighted and makes quite a blaze.

One must not forget that no Thanksgiving Day was allowed to pass, especially in the country, without seeing that every poor family had a turkey and store of pies. Not that such families were allowed to suffer at any time, but this was a special gift in recognition of God's love for all his children. In some families the young girls were permitted the luxury of baking special pies to be taken by themselves to some poor old person. I think the City Missionary Society, the Home for Little Wanderers, and like institutions, in carrying out as far as possible this idea, are doing fine service. Nor do I think, as I am afraid some do, that it is out of place to give a special dinner to the human beings, although criminal, who are confined in prisons. "While we were yet sinners."

But after all, the Thanksgiving Day charm is the family gathering. As a

day of individual spiritual thanks it amounts to little. A traveller away from home cannot catch its meaning except by contrast. It has its glory when the house rings with the laughter of children, and the honored grandparents, if themselves are not the hosts, sit in the easy chairs; when sons and sons-in-law and daughters and daughters-in-law are gathered at the homestead, and when the voice of reverent prayer rises to God. How they miss somebody who is too far away to come home! How the mothers wipe away a tear for somebody who cannot come back from the unseen world! It was the New England family that made the mighty New England life. Let the home festival be kept, brother, so long as it can be kept. Gather the children home again. The time comes fast enough, in these scattering days with continents to be settled and oceans made nothing but ferries, that the home is broken up.

I began with the words, "What it implies." My thought was deeper than that of the simple luxury of a plain New England festival. Did it mean thanks to God? Then it meant that God was a person, and that He has all power, and that He has intelligence, and that He is filled with love, and that He is perfectly wise in his methods. Is God as free as we are to do what seems best? Can He do that which seems needed at a given time? The head of a family can invite home a wandering son. Can God do the same? The head of a family can provide food for a particular occasion. Can God do the same? The head of a family can send gifts to poor and helpless people. Can God send like gifts where they are needed?

Philosophies trouble us. Many persons think it wise to deny any fact in the line of what are called special providences, that is, particular help in times of particular need, or particular adaptations to particular circumstances. Some go so far from this as to leave practically no God in the world, but make all life a fatalistic result of what they call law. Others stop part way and make all human beings in some sense free to do as they please, but under the dominion of an immutable law which has in it no intelligence of administration, as when a workman gets his fingers between the cogs of a machine. Others, more Christianly, theorize that God has so arranged all natural laws as to make each part a particular providence. But why not believe that God can at any time exercise as much freedom and as much judgment and as much practical kindness, at any given time, as the father of the family can do on Thanksgiving Day? I can write to my absent children on that day. Cannot God send a special message of love on that day? I can welcome them home. Cannot God welcome His children to a spiritual feast? I could pity one of my children who might be sick, or in trouble, with a special pity. Has not God said that He does, "as a father pitieth his children"? In fact, give me the faith, the only possible scientific faith and the only one worthy of God, that God holds His own agencies in His own hand far above things made of iron and stone, has His own spiritual messengers to go on His own errands, listens as the Infinite only can listen to the requests of His children, and has not abdicated the intelligent government of the creatures formed in His image. That is what Thanksgiving Day inevitably asserts.

Results.

If I were writing for boys, I should relate an occurrence of boyhood. The father, now gone to the believers' rest, was amusing himself with sowing some peas after dinner, and before returning to his business. He had drawn straight lines for the seed. The small boy, eager to help, said, "Father, let me sow the peas," and the father assented and went his way. Things went on favorably a few minutes until another boy came along who invited the young gardener to go off and play. The temptation was too strong, and the latter hastily smoothed off the lines, and buried the remaining peas in a spot perhaps a foot in diameter. At night the father asked, very fortunately, the boy thought, "My boy, are the peas all in the ground?" Of course, the boy said, "Yes, sir." In fact, they were, but some little time after the father invited the boy into the garden and pointed out a small thicket of shooting peas in one spot, with an absence of peas in the proper lines. The heedless lad was dismayed, but the wise father merely said, "My boy, always remember that things will come up about where you plant them," and — well, I wish I had better remembered the lesson through life.

We are not always so sure of a direct connection between cause and effect, and we may, therefore, be sometimes perplexed as to responsibility. Of course, if one gives much heed to the philosophies he will get perplexed at the very beginning. I used to hear in school days about the occasional cause, which only confuses, because an occasion is not a cause at all. It simply gives the opportunity for the cause to work. That "cause and effect" means merely an invariable sequence is about as satisfactory as to say that A causes B, because in repeating the alphabet in order the sequence is invariable. Common sense finds more satisfaction in adhering to the notion that a cause is something which causes something. I wish our benevolent society agents would not say, "our cause." What does the word mean in that connection?

But the question of responsibility for results is sometimes troublesome. I have no doubt that the small lad mentioned above was decidedly responsible for the failure of the horticultural pea harvest of that year. But suppose he had misjudged, and, although he had sowed them in the proper lines, had placed them too deep in the soil. Who would have been responsible? Doubtless the father for not giving him suitable instruction. Then neglect to nurture a child properly makes a parent at least partially responsible for the young man's evil course. Not entirely, for the young man is himself responsible by reason of his own conscience and that amount of truth and sound moral influence from which no young man can escape.

The young man ought to be held rigidly to conscience and righteousness in all arguments or appeals made to him, no matter what excuses he may render. But parents sometimes blame themselves needlessly when the results of their care are not what they could desire. A mother, whose son is temporarily astray, will search her memory to see where she failed, and will imagine failure on her part where it did not exist. The more conscientious she is the more she will chide herself for imaginary negligence. All that is required, so far as responsibility is concerned, is to follow the ordinary and reasonable

principles of Christian living and teaching, touched with the earnestness of parental love. The boy may nevertheless go astray. Usually he will come back again. But in the interval there have been powers at work which the parent cannot control, nor could an angel from heaven — the free will, the self-determining faculty, which make every human being an independent and separate person, together with the sad inheritance of a fallen nature. The parent is responsible only for his own duty, not for perfect wisdom and not for angelic powers. He is not responsible for results which he could not control. Of course, every man is bound to consider carefully what is likely to follow from his actions. He has no right to be heedless. There is such an offence as criminal negligence. A person who lights a prairie fire has no right to say that it did not occur to him that it would spread.

But when one, after due thought, has done what seemed to be wise at the time, one ought not to chide himself for an unfortunate occurrence. Every minister has met some mother who mournfully and sometimes morbidly says, "If I had called a different physician, the child might not have died." Lives are embittered by such a feeling. It needs a delicate touch to deal with such cases. Perhaps it needs special experience. "The comfort," says Paul, "wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." But such persons ought not to mourn. They did what was reasonably wise. A different course, for which, indeed, there was no occasion, was no guaranty of a different result. The responsibility was with the Heavenly Father, who doeth all things well.

Sunshine for the Child.

Once in my early ministry I received a written request that I would preach upon the proper training of children. I declined to do so, giving as a reason that I had had no experience. A score of years afterwards I received a similar request, and again I declined, telling of the former request and answer, and saying that now my reason was in the fact that I had had too much experience — that is, not that my results had been at all disastrous, but that my experience satisfied me that no sensible man can lay down any set of directions for the proper training of that strange being, a little child. Its nature defies uniform rules. Its wayward fancies defy analysis. Its varying moods make it different at different times, and the individuality of any one child distinguishes it from all others. The subtle springs of action are living and self-centred. I am shy of rules.

That there are some principles, is doubtless true. Principles, not molding machines. That a child should be enveloped in an atmosphere of love from earliest infancy, that the treatment should be invariably calm and gentle, that judicious, godly instruction should begin at the earliest possible date, that obedience should always be required to the very few demands which are expedient, and that hopeful prayer to the heavenly Father should be continual — these are hints of what parents will try to act upon. But such parents will not attempt to order every action of the child, nor deny the child proper indulgences, nor try to make pattern children. They make pattern things in

Sunshine for the Child.

brickyards. Trees are not made in molds. The child has the right of individuality. The child has also the right to a development belonging to its God-given nature. It, therefore, has a right to proper helps and surroundings. There is a sacredness in childhood which should command respect. "How can you use profane language before this little child?" was the rebuke I once heard in a little group of Tennesseeans in war time, and the profanity of the abashed man instantly ceased. He acknowledged the sacredness of childhood.

In my opinion the little children ought to have special privileges instead of being set aside as of no importance. The nursery should be the sunniest room in the whole house, and the pleasantest smile should be for the little ones. I will tell an incident. I was once in the pulpit of a certain church for some months while the church was waiting for its coming pastor. Of course, on the first Sunday, I went into the Sunday school. As a result I made a little address at the Sunday school concert later that day, of which I can recall the substance quite accurately. "Brethren and sisters, I believe in giving children the pleasantest room in a house. They need it. Now, to-day I have been in the several rooms of this fine church building, and I find your primary children in that room on the left which is used for a kitchen, and is warmed by a kitchen stove. I find the room to be on the north side where the sun never enters, and to-day the snow is against the windows. I go to the corresponding room on the south side, and I find it well carpeted, well warmed, and the sun shining in through the windows. This room is used for an adult Bible class, and it contains a teacher and five other old saints just ready for glory. I have suggested an exchange of rooms, and I think we should have a vote upon it. Let the fifty little children have the sunny room, and give the kitchen stove to the six saints who can be happy anywhere while waiting for Gabriel's trump." I asked for a vote of the primary children, and its result was enthusiastically unanimous. Two weeks from that day the little children went happily into the pleasant room. Their very faces brightened up, and they dwelt in the sunshine. Jesus once took a little child and set him in the midst. "Of such," He said, "is the kingdom of heaven."

Young life needs sunshine. Harshness, censoriousness, severity, these take the life out of children. You have seen families where the father was very alert to find every possible fault or imperfection in a child's conduct, but he never commended the child for what was meritorious, or for well-meant attempts. If you have watched the result, you have seen the darkened spirit of the child. Have you been yourself at fault in failing to see and commend what deserved commendation? If so, and you will do well to examine yourself, try the method of appreciation, with just sufficient expression of approval, and you will see a brighter face than you have been seeing. Perhaps I recollect something. You expect your child to develop properly? Then imagine yourself with some flower buds too slowly beginning to open, and instead of bringing the plants out into sunshine, in your impatience you are applying knives and chisels to force the bud to blossom. That is not God's way. That is not the way to treat the little one whom God has given you. The young life may easily be blighted, and it is pretty sure to be if you try tools instead of sunlight.

Some parents say that their children must be taught self-denial, meaning, thereby, that they must be constantly thwarted, and their desires contradicted without reason. This is very foolish. True self-denial is to be taught by seasonable instruction, and gaining the child's understanding. Obedience is always to be required, but tests of obedience are not to be manufactured. Trust in a parent's wisdom and love is but a copy of what God requires of us toward Himself. To my mind the child has a right to every indulgence not inconsistent with his good. Somebody will recall the story of an orphan asylum in the old world where a visitor with his hands caressingly smoothed the hair of a sober-looking child. "Please do not do that," said the attendant, "we never do it; he has to go out into the world, and must be hardened for it." What a life, and what a system! But there are sometimes glimpses of it in homes.

Now I am not putting these things merely on the basis of what is wise, but on the ground that the birth of the child into this world gives him certain rights. The father is not an absolute monarch. He has no more right to the child's obedience than the child has to considerate and loving treatment and all proper indulgences. I honestly believe that far more lives have been ruined by strict government than by liberal indulgences and seemingly little control. Each is bad, but the free life of a child under the observance of a kind eye, I think, gives better results than the severer system. It allows a natural development which is the child's right, merely guided when guidance is needed, and restrained when restraint is necessary. This is not inconsistent with real government, although nurture is a far better word than government.

With this view of childhood one may naturally suppose that I am as nearly as is possible a disbeliever in the rightfulness or general usefulness of brute force in the infliction of penalties. If I did believe in it, it would certainly be in the whipping-post for certain offences in brutalized men. But certainly with children it is barbaric. To me there is nothing meaner than a school committee rule which requires a subordinate teacher to send a delinquent to a head master for corporal punishment. That master is exactly in the position of the official to whom owners used to send slaves to be whipped, in the old slavery times. He degrades himself by allowing himself to be made this kind of a petty executioner. Nor is a system of blows at all essential to true government. I knew a person who was for years a most successful teacher in various grades of public schools as well as in private ones of a high standard. Schools which in some instances seemed a kind of Botany Bay were placed in her care. That teacher exercised entire control, and she never yet, but once, in all her experience, inflicted any bodily punishment, and she regretted that single instance as being not only needless but hurtful. This implies moral force, which is, after all, the strongest of all forces. Beating a child seems brutal. Solomon, it may be quoted, says, "He that spareth his rod, hateth his son." I presume that this was applicable to the callous age in which Solomon lived, and as such it remains on record. But it may certainly be classed with those things which our Lord said had been allowed for the hardness of men's hearts. As the Christian dispensation came in, with its spiritual power, there came something nobler than rods. Much better is that apostolic direction, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord."

Sunshine for the Child.

I suppose that nobody will see any connection between what I have written and Christmas Day. I have been content to leave to others the regular thoughts of the grand incarnation of the Saviour of the world. Yet it was Christmas Day which made me think of the sacredness of childhood. Our Lord was a babe and thereby made the babe everywhere sacred. Our Lord grew to be a little child and was the incarnate representative of every little child. I take this idea and I reverently imagine Jesus in a group of such. I imagine Him when in His ministry He took the little child in His arms or set one in the group of His disciples, and I ask myself how Jesus would have treated that child, and I answer to myself that with the Lord the child would have sat in the sunshine.

Perambulators.

I REMEMBER an open, square framework, each side of which measured not over eighteen inches, and which was, perhaps, twenty inches high. It had four posts and cross-pieces, like rounds of a chair. The posts ended in casters. They would place inside of this framework a young child who had weak ankles. The child could not walk alone, although more than old enough to do so, but place him inside of this framework and he could partly stand and partly rest his arms on the top side-pieces and travel around the room, by the convenience of the casters, on the hard floor. Then there was also a little seat inside of this frame, so that he could sit down when he was tired. I used to watch the young child as he rolled around the room. Fortunately he became strong and walked alone in due time. Doubtless the frame on rollers had helped to make him strong, but sometimes children with weak ankles do not outgrow the need.

I have often thought of this old nursery frame. It was a great convenience. I have thought of it principally in its perfect analogy — a well-constructed framework of systematic truth, a dovetailed system, in which may be placed a person who cannot walk alone, and who can find in it protection and support, with rollers on which his framework can travel, and having convenient shelving on which to sit down when he is weary. It is a great comfort that such frames exist. Many an occupant of such can push himself about with facility. He might fall down if he were taken out. If he were without it he might fall over some slight obstacle. Outside of it he becomes bewildered; but if inside, he learns to roll his whole system with force against anything which opposes. He can do excellently if you let him stay in his system. He has something to lean upon. It is cruel to disturb him. Take away a single round and you weaken his perambulator. Take away an important stick and he becomes helpless. He learns to push his machine around with great skill. Casters turn on their axes. The machine itself is well framed, and its parts are securely fastened to each other. It is far better that one who needs should occupy it rather than be helpless. Sometimes these machines run into each other, and then we have polemics.

But this is not education. A child, in learning to walk, usually steadies himself at first by holding to a chair. Next he pushes the chair along. Then he abandons the chair and walks. Education does not consist in furnishing chairs never to be abandoned, nor in furnishing the nursery frame which I have recalled, for anything but temporary use. It expects to develop the powers. They are not educated who are to remain in the machine on casters. Perhaps it is not necessary that they should be. They are safer where they are, and often are very useful in their way. Some people's faith seems to depend upon the system which some great man has framed. Why disturb them?

Years ago I found an old arithmetic. It was used in the time of my father's boyhood. I have somewhere an arithmetic more than one hundred and fifty years old. Each of these gave simply rules, and an example under each rule. It gave no explanations whatever, and no reasons. The method was purely arbitrary. Yet some boys became good arithmeticians in those days. It was because the intellect is greater than formulas, and would not be satisfied until it had found the principle inside the formula. In my boyhood the new arithmetic then in use embodied the analytical principle. The book itself did what the old teachers had probably done without the help of the old books. Our teacher — and I have never seen a better one — used to insist upon analysis and explanation. Each of us placed work upon the blackboard, and was obliged to explain every step in the process and give the reason therefor.

A modern system of slate work, passed from one pupil to another so as to have the answers read by other than the scholar who did the work, is a stupid substitute for the old blackboard. To get a correct answer is not the first object, but to know how to get correct answers. I am aware that to good teachers this is merely a trite remark, but they must excuse it for the sake of those who misunderstand the word education. Mere formulas are far better than nothing. But the power to reason is incomparably greater than knowing how to use formulas. There is a plain distinction between arithmetic and Welch's Arithmetic, or between arithmetic and Adams' Arithmetic. I dare not come down to any later compiler, being in dread of rival houses. But truth is not synonymous with somebody's system of truth. Walking is not the structure on rollers.

After all, I am not sure that machine methods are the easiest. In early days of foolishness I worked through two or three of those old arithmetics, I think from curiosity. There was one rule which I could never master. I think it was about what was called compound proportion. There were height and width, and length and days, and men and dollars, and weight and hours — all in confusion. There was a rule. These figures were to be placed in three columns, one that was greater than something else being put in one column, and sometimes being put somewhere else because it was greater — and so on. I could never get things right under the rule, but I could obtain the proper result by my own method of straightforward work.

It is plain, then, what education really has in view. It is the power to go alone. It is not departing from the subject but going forward in exactly the same line if we look at moral training. Education contemplates mental and moral alike. Mental development without moral control works evil. Not that it is evil in itself, but that powers developed without moral stamina are the

Perambulators.

more dangerous to their owner. Hence is the great interest felt in the especial importance of the religious element in schools of liberal training.

The real educational principle cannot be abandoned in moral training. At first there must be guidance and much control. Truth must be taught to the child upon the absolute statements of the parent. Habits must be begun in one little more than an infant by the judicious formative hand of the father and mother. It might be very comforting if we could put the child inside of a framework and keep him there. But it is useless to try. To succeed in so doing would itself be the worst thing that could happen. The boy must learn to walk. The young man must be trusted to develop himself from within. If this does not succeed no other method could succeed, and he cannot be freed from temptations. Some time ago I was consulted by an anxious mother about trusting her son in a great preparatory school. She was afraid. She had been told of great temptations in that school. Had the son shown any signs of evil? No. He was upright and manly. Then what was there to be afraid of? The temptations to immoral courses. True, there might be danger. There always is danger. I could not but feel sympathy with this motherly heart. Her son was her treasure, and her own pure Christian nature dreaded any possible contamination of that son. I suggested to her that she must trust her boy. I told her that the alternative was between placing him in the great school and locking him up at home in the pantry. She decided wisely, although timidly. That son, with the clear eye and the manly form, brought up thus far as he has been under her Christian guidance, will be a man.

The Old Folks.

I AM not quite sure when they begin to be Old Folks. There are no dividing lines in nature. Where is the line between the torrid zone and the temperate zone? Where is the line between summer and autumn? Where is the line between what some Old Folks used to call "daylight and dark"? We shall have to make rather an arbitrary estimate for this writing. It must include a mixture of age and lessening powers. I think it implies the need of rest, although some work may still be done. If "the days of our years are three score years and ten," then the years beyond that would seem to designate the Old Folks. But not a few persons beyond that limit are still strong and active. Such persons are apt to resent being called Old Folks, and we will leave them out. They will come to it surely enough by and by. But just now we will take in no one who has not at least gone beyond the seventy years.

Are the Old Folks a trouble? Certainly not, in some households of my acquaintance. I have in mind one whom I saw lately, over ninety years of age, by no means helpless, but certainly beyond labor. He is not led to feel that he is a burden. He has all possible respect paid to him by children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, all of whom are in the same house. Less old is the wife of his long years, and full of cares which she pleases to

have. This family is a Christian family. Respect for the aged is a Christian characteristic. Indeed, it was written in the book of Leviticus: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God." The connection in this sentence of the Mosaic law is significant. I am strongly inclined to think that young people, especially children, are not generally taught to practise this commandment. Certainly, I notice young people who seem too languid to yield the easy-chair to the white-haired, and the feebleness of growing boys in street cars is a sad sign of the physical degeneracy in the coming generation.

The family to which I have alluded is not a rare instance of its kind. I could recall one where the grandfather never had a word or look of disrespect or inattention from the grandchildren. The youngest understood that the grandfather held the first place of honor in that house. Those children were eager to give him their little services. It is but fair to say that he deserved it all by the excellence of his own character and spirit. Then, on the other side of the family, there was similar desert and respect, although distance made its exhibition less possible. I think that these children, now all grown up, will always have unclouded and happy recollections of their respect for the Old Folks, and will be unchanged in their habit toward the generation still remaining.

It is easy to see in any home what is the feeling toward the aged. There is something in the very air which tells the story. The old people themselves show it, as well as the young people. When the old people are felt to be a burden they understand it. Every pastor has seen instances of each kind. It is not to be expected that all things are to be conducted exactly as the Old Folks would have them. Changes in methods of living are inevitable. The advice of the elders is, however, of more value than is often supposed. There is great good in the experience of a long Christian life. The calm repose of faith is healthful in the household. The old people are not troubled by the vagaries through which the young people are passing. The old have gone through all that long ago. Bunyan's Beulah-land is in many a home. There, as he tells us, the sun shineth night and day, and here they who are weary do rest, and because the orchards and vineyards belong to the king of the celestial country the fruits are free. It is a great blessing to have the precious influence of this mature Christian life in a home waiting for the shining ones.

But what if there are instances of weaknesses and fretfulness, such that special care is constantly demanded? Then all the more is the duty laid upon the younger, and the privilege granted, of cheerful service. These dependents are entitled to faithful and loving care. It is a poor and mean life which does only what is agreeable and easy. Filial respect is ennobling and exalting. Children brought up in an atmosphere where the aged, even if troublesome, are not treated with patient kindness, will have their better natures poisoned. They will have no ideas but those of self. Indeed, there is something in this sin of disrespect which blights beauty of character and spirituality of life.

It is possible that those who are in strength of life do not realize that the Old Folks from whom they are separated yearn for visits, or at least letters. I chanced to preach once in reference to old age, and at the close of the service a strong man came to me and, not without a tear or two, expressed his great

The Old Folks.

regret that he had not had this subject presented long ago. His aged mother had lived within twenty miles, and, although he had really not lacked love for her, he had scarcely ever written or had visited her oftener than twice a year. It was now too late, but if the years could be lived over again, he said, not a fortnight should ever pass without his visiting his dear, old widowed mother. Fortunately the mother had been in the care of another of the family, and had not lacked except for the sight of each one of her sons. Aged hearts hunger sometimes.

Am I obliged to go a little farther in my discussion? Perhaps it is best. I have in memory a man who, although possessed of good property, engaged in a large and profitable business and, occupying a pretentious residence, suffered his father to be an almshouse pauper in another State. This man moved in reasonably good society. In fact, I must duplicate this case by another almost precisely parallel which was within my personal knowledge. But these men prospered outwardly. My mother used to say, when one was known to ill-treat the Old Folks, "It will be paid back to him." She had seen cases of such retribution for a sin of which she had a great horror. But I do not think that her belief in this respect is always verified. God's accounts are not all settled in this world.

There may be a milder form of cruelty than the almshouse. The name of this institution has not a pleasant sound. Besides, one is not governed by the money question. What shall he do with the Old Folks? Perhaps the father has got quite old, say eighty-five. You can board him out. Find some secluded place in a quiet family, on a back road, a good, long way off from you, where he will have plenty to eat and will not be harshly treated. True, he will be among entire strangers and may be without the slightest Christian sympathy. He would like to see you, but you cannot take the time out of your work to go and see him. He will be lonesome, and his heart is hungering for his children's presence; but have you not provided him with good food and good shelter? The sentimentalism which thinks that the old saint should be among his own kin, at least within immediate reach of his own flesh and blood, and be in an atmosphere of Christian affection, is not to be tolerated. He is likely to cry himself tired at first, but the heartache will get dulled and he will die pretty soon. When you are notified go and get his body. I am giving a real incident.

The Old Folks have hearts. Hearts eventually stop beating. Is it not told that, in some countries, they bring the helpless aged to the banks of a sacred river, fill their nostrils with sacred mud and leave them to the overflowing waters? This seems harsh. There is a safer and a milder method. Let the aged man's soul be frozen out of him in the manner which I have just described.

LESSONS FROM LIFE.

Ten Years Without Smoke.

This article is written solely because of the importunity of the *Congregationalist*. It is not prompted by vanity nor censoriousness. If it is in bad taste to answer the question, "How can one leave off smoking?" the *Congregationalist* must bear the blame. And here let me say, what the paper's delicacy may forbid it to say, that I have not the slightest connection with its editorial staff or management, and therefore am not responsible for its excellencies.

After ten years of entire and perfect abstinence from the use of narcotics in any form, following many years of daily habit, I presume the only good this statement can do is to show to some brethren who desire to leave off smoking that the way to do it is to leave off. Some of the brethren were grieved because I would not condescend to equivocate or apologize. I am equally frank now. I do not judge others. There are worse things than smoking. Malice and lying are worse.

I think we used to hear, in our studies, that the will is always as the greatest apparent good. I never believed this statement. It substitutes the term "good" for the term "pleasure." One often chooses what at the moment pleases him most, when it is in no sense an "apparent good" to him. Narcotics and stimulants prove this assertion. A narcotic is not, at the very moment a man uses it, an apparent good, but an apparent evil. It is only a deception in language to say that the gratification of his appetite for what is unnatural and hurtful is at the moment the greatest apparent good; it is not so. If tobacco is, to an intelligent and honest man, an apparent good, why blame him for using it? In fact, he uses it because by years of habit a condition has been created which tyrannically demands it. It seems a necessity to quiet his nervous system, and for the time it does so; but it is the Old Man of the Sea in the story of Sinbad the Sailor.

Is this fact of *hurtfulness*, however, always a sufficiently powerful help? No! partly on account of the various synonyms which mean "tobacco." Tobacco is sometimes politely called "over-work," or "nervous prostration," or "excessive tax on the sympathies." Sometimes it is scientifically denominated the "pneumo-gastric nerve." Sometimes it is courteously styled "a sea voyage," or "a trip to Europe." So often are these various terms only different methods of spelling the word "tobacco," that a wise physician, in many

Ten Years Without Smoke.

cases, returns to the study of orthography before prescribing. So easy is it to delude one's self that I do not think that the argument of hurtfulness has much practical effect. And yet a friend of mine, whom I had privately advised to abandon the narcotic, but without effect, did so when startled by his physician's warning that he must choose very soon between tobacco and hopeless invalidism. Another friend of mine, who became alarmed at what writers said of smoking, had given up the habit for six weeks, when he told me that he saw no difference in his condition; but I found that he had taken to chewing ten hours a day! A conviction of its *hurtfulness* may be useful, but I think that it rarely is sufficient to furnish will power.

Sometimes a consideration of responsibility in the matter of *example* may have some power. I have never had any tendency to petting persons who plead the example of others to justify them in doing what they would have done in any event. Such pleading is usually cowardly dodging. It is a refuge for lack of manliness. At the same time it is rather difficult to answer. Not that it justifies the one who pleads it, but that it seems that any permanent habit of an intelligent and conscientious man is presumably harmless. If it is not harmless, the example may be unfortunate. Perhaps, also, where it does not seem to injure a person, it may be a question whether the admitted general injury to great numbers, and especially to young men, may not be a reason for abandoning narcotics. Upon reflection, one may not like, even in the exercise of liberty, to throw his influence where it may perhaps be hurtful to those who rely upon him. This is sometimes an effective motive.

I recall the act of one noble man in my first church who, leaving his home one morning with his cigar lighted, saw a young man of his Sunday school class coming toward him, and instinctively held his cigar behind him until they had spoken and passed. A moment after he felt ashamed of himself. "Will I do what I don't want him to see?" He hurled his cigar away from him, for the sake of the young man and his own self-respect, and by the grace of God never smoked again. Perhaps this is a rare case, but it may be much more common than I have thought. Illustrative of the dislike which one may have to indulge before others: During the meeting of the A. B. C. F. M. in Philadelphia, when I was quite young, being guest in a home where smoking would have been an abomination, I walked out after an evening session, with a cigar. As I stood leaning against a pile of boards, I saw a distinguished doctor of divinity approaching, and, as I was rather timid then, I hid my cigar behind me. The doctor stopped, and we chatted on various subjects, until at last I boldly brought forward my cigar and said, "Doctor, the fact is, I came out here to smoke." "Bless my soul!" said the good man, "so did I." And he likewise produced the cigar hitherto held behind his back.

Sometimes the spirit of *self-sacrifice* is successful. Usually a permanent habit is not easily abandoned. To help others may help one's self. I will recall the case of a noted divine, father of one of our present secretaries of missions, who was appointed to visit and try to reclaim a younger man falling into intemperance. The falling brother finally told his visitor that that person could not understand the difficulty of breaking the bondage of appetite. The divine reflected a little, and then said that he could. He had tried in vain to

break the tobacco bondage. He now promised to fight side by side with his younger brother. He did so; the struggle was hard, but by the grace of God he conquered, and saved his younger brother.

In fact, it is a little difficult to see how one who exhorts others to that conversion which breaks the bondage of the whole nature, and believes that the grace of God is able to change the whole character, breaking up old habits and destroying old loves, should confess that that grace of God is, in his own case, impotent to destroy a single appetite, if he feels that the appetite is evil. Is it not a Christian belief and the principle of Christian work, that the power of God, while not at once removing what may be called the physical consequences of the violation of law, yet can and does change or remove the tastes for such violation? The consequences of the long use of narcotics may take a lifetime to remedy; the craving for them may be conquered by the same grace which led Paul to say, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Therefore, the weak question sometimes found in the religious papers, "What substitute can I use?" is not exactly according to the preaching which holds that "the power of God unto salvation" is sufficient for all conditions. This kind of question, this looking for a substitute, is to my mind a secret of failure. It discusses the question with appetite. It tries to pacify a craving which must be extinguished and not coddled. It keeps the imagination still active and powerful. Most of all, it fails to see that regenerating power is perfectly competent to bring all things into subjection to the divine law. I am writing for Christian believers.

But I have not answered the question, "How did *you* leave off?" I have intimated above various influences to which some turn with varying success. I hesitate to tell personal experiences, but I will do so. My own abstinence came about, however, in a way somewhat difficult to recommend. It can give nothing but hints. Ten years ago this December, I was unpleasantly ill. A touch of malaria, from a revival of it in 1874, manifested itself. Some pneumonia followed. After that, the first day I came downstairs, and sat in an easy-chair before an open wood fire, I said, "Now get me my pipe!" At once my wife began, in a bland and coaxing way: "Oh, I would n't smoke! You are not strong enough; and besides it hurts you, and the doctor says so, and I would n't begin again." "Well," said I, "it 's mean in the doctor; for he smokes. Give me my pipe!" A good friend of ours broke in triumphantly: "You can't smoke; we 've hid your pipes!" I saw there was a conspiracy, evidently the result of determination. I gave the matter up that day, and the next day called again for the pipe, but with the same result; and I have never touched a narcotic since. The method I suggest, therefore, for leaving off, is — an attack of pneumonia, and a patient wife, assisted by her skilful friend.

There was something more in it, however. The second night, I deliberated. The whole subject passed in review. I was not foolish enough to suppose that the narcotic habit is natural, or helpful, except to quiet an acquired craving. I was not affected by the staple reference to the fatal consequences of one drop of the oil of tobacco on a cat's tongue, because men do not smoke the oil of tobacco; but nerves kept in order only by a narcotic are not in a healthful condition.

I am not sure that the death of a most excellent physician, a relative of mine,

Ten Years Without Smoke.

had then taken place, as medical opinion of the highest authority said it did, from tobacco-paralysis, in the prime of his life and usefulness. The question of expense, by no means an insignificant one, I scarcely thought of. That of being quoted as an example by young men and boys did, however, cross my thought. Was it worth while? Was it necessary in this particular way to grieve many Christian parents? But there was one thought which had peculiar weight. My most excellent physician had come into my sick-room daily, skilful, kind, faithful, but often with such a fearful odor of tobacco smoke on his garments as, in my sensitive condition, almost to drive me frantic. I remembered in my pastorate the ablutions and change of clothing with which I had tried to avoid this very evil in visiting the sick; and yet I had a painful suspicion that some weak and sick person might have suffered in spite of all my efforts. One learns considerable by being sick himself. And it seemed to me that the delicate sensitiveness of the sick-chamber was not benefited by the odors of tobacco in one's clothing. I will not say that there were not other thoughts and other motives parallel with these. There could probably be but one argument on the other side. It is said that cannibals will not eat the flesh of smokers, because it is so thoroughly soaked in nicotine; but this immunity is not needed except by those who are going among the cannibals, and therefore this precaution need not be immediate.

Putting all these things together, and with a little thought also of the Pauline argument, I said to myself, "What shall I do?" The question was between a daily habit of many years, and an argument all against it. I decided. I have never since regarded it as an open question. Persons make a mistake in exercising their will power to determine not to smoke; that power should be exercised to refuse to consider the question itself. But I must add, the decision which I made was linked with my theology, namely, the absolute inability of human nature by itself, and the absolute sufficiency of the grace of God. Will one persevere in abstinence? This theology is the only promise. But let him not boast!

I do not think I would have gratified even the *Congregationalist* by writing this article, if it were not to tell young men, and especially students, to let narcotics alone. They are needless, they are unnatural, they are injurious, they are despotic. The Oberlin rule for its students is right. I took the same position at our General Association five or six years ago. The rule at Dartmouth that no smoking student can hold a scholarship is right for two reasons: first, in its opportunity to save the student, and second, because, in this age of Christian need for poor boys, a better use can be made of benevolent funds than to dissipate them in smoke.

I do not judge others; least of all the eminent and good men who use tobacco. I think, however, that ten years of entire abstinency, after thirty years' habit, qualifies me to speak, and warrants me in saying, If you wish to leave off, *you can!*

A year or two after the above decision, having chanced to enter a smoking-car which had been running fifty miles, I hastened through it with great rapidity because of nausea. To my statement to my wife how much filthier smoking-cars were than formerly, and how much denser and meaner the smoke, she soothingly replied, "Pshaw! they were always so, only you did not know it then."

New Times and New Men.

It is hard to tell where old times end, and new times begin. The division is not a line, not even a movable one. It is only when points of time considerably distant from each other are taken that one perceives the change. Do new times demand new men?

Not long after the great Civil War I was fortunate enough to be one of nine or ten guests at a dinner table, of which Gen. W. T. Sherman was the chief. In the after-dinner chat the recent war was naturally discussed. In the course of conversation I ventured the remark: "Well, if we have another war, we have the generals." My old commander, with his usual quickness, replied: "Perhaps you mean Grant and Sheridan and myself." Of course I did. "No," said the general, "we shall never fight another great war. Men who are successful leaders in one great war do not fight through another. If another war should take place within a dozen years, the chances are that other men would come to lead. The principles of war, of course, do not change, but there is something in the very air requiring new men for new times." And the general gave a brilliant historical review of such matters, both in our own country and abroad, which, admitting exceptions, of course, and explaining some careers, as those of almost continuous warfare, very strongly sustained his assertion.

If such a theory be true, it cannot be limited to the art of war. It will enter into business, education, literature, and religious work. It seems hard to believe that experience is of little or no value. Nor ought this to be the fact. If vigor decays, by reason of age or disability incurred by service, even experience can be of little value; but while vigor remains unimpaired, experience ought to tell. If it does not, where is the fault? I do not myself think that General Sherman's modesty was quite justifiable. A war within a reasonable number of years, even with Grant gone, would have found its successful leader in the soldier who planned and executed the magnificent campaign from Chattanooga to Atlanta, or the more dazzling, but less arduous, campaign from Atlanta to the sea; or in the bold, dashing, but wonderfully skilled, soldier who saw the right moment to "push things" in the final operations in Virginia. Nor certainly is it to be forgotten that Gladstone has been three times Prime Minister of England, and that, although now eighty years of age, his present campaign, whether he lives to see it fought through or not, is destined to be successful. Nor that Von Moltke was sixty-five years of age when he led the German army to its great victory at Sadowa, and sixty-nine years of age when he executed his matured plans in the conquest of France.

But, after admitting all exceptions, General Sherman's theory seems to be proof of his sagacity. In cases of great emergency certainly, new men appear to be provided. Lincoln was a marked instance, and the noted political leaders had to give way. New men do not really reinforce, they often supersede. The indefinable something, which makes great leadership, is felt, and it cannot be manufactured. Lincoln was in sympathy with the united moral and patriotic drift of his time. The coming leadership may be mistakenly imagined. The newspapers found Young Napoleons before the country found Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan.

New Times and New Men.

But what is the principle as to ordinary people, like ourselves? Is it true that the changing conditions of life make for themselves new methods; and that the change in methods finds men adapted to them?

Taking two decidedly separated points of time, the significant contrasts appear. When I was a boy, Pollock's "Course of Time" and Young's "Night Thoughts" were, to multitudes, the masterpieces of the poetry of the world. Does any one remember, without referring to Allibone, the first names of those writers? I am not sure that Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy," in which multitudes revelled twenty years later, was proof of anything but the fact of a change. Jonathan Edwards preached the truth mightily, but any minister who should now repeat or imitate his sermons would justly be thought an imbecile. Some provincial system of theology may have been the wisest defence against the enemies of truth, as they were marshalled thirty years ago, but its specialties may now be as useful as old batteries would be if replaced by the war department on Manassas plain. Joseph Cook may agree in substance with the thought of his fathers, but his genius either in his lectures or his magazine demands "Our Day."

What the times have need of are men and women who, by instinct, apprehend existing needs and wants, and who are in sympathy with the necessary methods of using essential and unchangeable things. They must not feel that principles, which are eternal, and the applications of them, with which they are familiar, are identical; nor that truth, which is immutable, and the phrases in which they have imperfectly framed their conceptions of truth, are equally infallible; nor that vital forces, which are infinite, are limited to the narrow methods which their experience has found useful. We have persons, many of them, who add to their ripe experience and cultured ability just this sympathy with the current of moving life, and who are therefore equally free from recklessness and fossilization. They can oppose present error or favor sound progress. The times have a place for such men. We have also persons who distrust the new Christian activities, such as the Young Men's Associations, the Christian Endeavor Societies, the lay preaching, and the like, and this is because they lack faith in vital forces; and some are afraid to trust Christianized thinking, which is because they lack faith in the Holy Ghost. All times demand persons in touch with their movements. If those in place fail in this particular, the question of superseding is but a question of time.

If I were writing upon civil service reform, I should distinguish between two classes. Officials whose work is largely routine, where experience tells as years go on, may well remain till their powers fail; but persons in those grades where they express and must practically develop the changing policies of the State, ought to be in sympathy with those policies, and the necessary changes of persons should from time to time be made.

Years ago, in a debate upon certain resolutions, I rashly ventured the remark that a certain Peace Society concerned therein was, in its then administration, a humbug. I felt a little sorry for my frank expression until I read the criticisms of the secretary. "What!" said he in horror, "the song of the angels on the plains of Bethlehem a humbug!" Then I felt relieved. That society is all right now, and this illustrates my subject.

Safety-valves.

"SAFETY-VALVE — a valve fitted to the boiler of a steam-engine, which opens and lets out the steam when the pressure within becomes too great for safety." This appears in Webster's Dictionary. The author seems to have been unconscious that his definition had a much broader range than steam-engines. Boys, for instance. An active boy must have some chance to let off his extra activity. If a boy does not have this opportunity legitimately, he becomes moody and restless, and is likely to vent his superfluous energy in some unlawful manner. It is a great mistake to repress the energies of boys, or, for that matter, of girls. The active games to which boys naturally turn are not merely for exercise; the boys must work off their extra power. What is often considered mischief is nothing but the inevitable blowing off. They will outgrow it, and their natural energy will soon enough be piped, like the natural gas of the coal fields, and made to be useful. Their invention in mischief is only the prophecy of genius in practical life. Mothers worry needlessly over active children. Little children are called good when nothing is meant but quiet. Not long ago a primary teacher heard a loud whistle in school. Turning around she said quickly, "Who did that?" One of the youngest and brightest triumphantly answered, "Why, Miss W., did n't you know I could whistle? 'T was *me!*" To punish that boy would have been wicked. A gentle suggestion that he perform his whistling at recess only would be sufficient. He must whistle sometimes. But steam-engines and boys and men have some things in common. The necessity of safety-valves applies to all three. From the dead matter of engines to the physical activity of boys is one step; another is to men's logical productions. There is nothing like logic, as was admirably proved in Holmes's "The Deacon's One Hoss Shay," and there is nothing more practically certain than that the most perfectly logical structure may be unbearable. If Edwards "On the Will" is unanswerable, then so much the worse for Edwards. Conscience and hearts are just as important factors in ascertaining the truth as the reasoning faculty is, and no conclusions which conscience or heart condemn can be correct, although the logic may seem to be without a flaw. In fact, whenever the conscience or the heart rebels at the logic some safety-valve becomes necessary, or the whole logical system will explode.

We can see plenty of illustrations. Human nature cannot endure rigid systems.

The Roman Catholic Church holds, or we used to think it did, that no person could be saved outside of that church. It was easy to prove this theory by unanswerable arguments. But the severity of the doctrine was too much for kind-hearted Catholics who saw the many Christian excellences which existed in Christians of other kinds. The escape of "invincible ignorance" was found to be happily possible. A Christian might be saved if, on account of his education, he could not discern the real Church, provided he showed by his spirit that he would enter the true Church at once, if he only saw it. Hence, the reply of the servant girl to the minister in whose family she was employed. "Now, Katy," he said, "you believe that I shall be damned?" "Oh, no," she answered eagerly. "But how can I be saved?" he asked. "Oh!" said she,

Safety-valves.

"your riverence will be saved by your riverence's ignorance!" She had good authority for her view. Turning to the Catechism of Christian Doctrine, prepared by the Plenary Council at Baltimore in 1884 (which has much gospel truth with its errors), we find this statement, some words of which I italicize: "All are bound to belong to the Church; and he who *knows the Church to be the true Church*, and remains out of it, cannot be saved." The italicized words are the relief which Catholics can feel.

Baptists will pardon me if I acknowledge that from their premises there is no escape from the doctrine of "close communion." Nor is it possible for them logically to acknowledge as a Church a church of sprinkled Christians. The severity of their logic is a grief to them. Especially does it seem hard that they cannot dismiss to a Congregational church a Baptist brother who desires to make this change. Logically they cannot do it. I think I am right in saying that formerly such a brother could obtain no letter, and was excommunicated if he joined a Congregational church. To continue the severe practice rather endangered the principles themselves. Christian kindness has found a relief. I copy from a printed form: "This is to certify that brother A. B. is a member in regular standing of the —— Baptist church of ——. As he proposes to unite with another Christian denomination, we cannot, according to our views of ecclesiastical order and discipline, give him the customary letter of dismission. But, as we allow him the right of private judgment, we would offer no obstacle to the performance of what he considers as duty. Should he execute his avowed purpose, his relation to us will be considered as dissolved. . . . N. B. The earliest notice of his connection with you is requested." Now, this is Christian, and a great relief to all parties.

I hope another denomination, which I most highly respect, will not feel hurt if I give an incident which I have considerable reason to believe was a genuine case, which is more than can be said of a large number of the many stories to which that excellent people have become accustomed. I refer to "the people called Quakers." I tell the story as it was told me. In the early part of the late war, earnest people were trying to raise funds for the Sanitary Commission. Two of them called upon a wealthy Friend as they went from house to house. They laid the matter before him, telling him of the sufferings of sick or wounded soldiers. "No," sternly answered the usually generous, and warmly-loyal man; "thee knows that we are Friends, and do not believe in war. Thee should n't come here!" They suggested to him that the aid was wanted solely for suffering men. "War did it," he answered roughly, "and it is very hard in thee to put Friends in such a position. We are patriotic, and we want to help the suffering, but we believe in peace. Why, thee knows that we did not like going to law even; and if when thee goes out of this room," he added sharply, "and passes through that hall, if thee should find a bag of gold on the table, and carry it off, thee knows I never should prosecute thee!" The Friend's wife had just left the room, and the two solicitors did most remarkably find a bag of gold on the table, and carried it away, and were never prosecuted.

That is, logic may prove too much. Many a man's doctrinal faith has gone to pieces because he saw no other escape from conclusions at which the con-

science and heart of humanity revolt. This danger is avoided in one of two ways. Eventually the system, after slowly becoming irksome, or falling into a state of "innocuous desuetude," has to be revised — as is now the necessity laid upon the Presbyterian Church. But a temporary and easy expedient comes in the shape of some safety valve.

For instance, when I was a boy, the plea of missionary agents was based on the assertion that every person who did not hear of, and believe in, Christ in this life, was inevitably lost. But, considering how men became sinners, the conclusion was terrible. It inevitably tended to shake faith in the whole system of salvation. An escape is discovered — practically something like the Catholic idea above referred to, that one would enter the true Church if he only saw it, and such can be saved; or, whoever permanently rejects or accepts the innermost voice of conscience rejects or accepts the essential Christ. The old argument (1) that no one can be saved without personal faith in Christ, and (2) "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" was thus supplemented by hypotheses which, although inconsistent with the ancient mission theory, and inconsistent with the ancient theology, seem to be a great relief to some people.

We have, however, a safety-valve attachment which can be affixed to any creed, and which is a favorite way of escape. It is the phrase "for substance of doctrine." Whether "substance" refers to Scripture truth or to the creed itself does not appear, which is all the more fortunate. Apply this to any statement of faith, and all things are easy. Whether a man believes one part or another, little or much, nobody knows. The phrase is like the wonderful tent mentioned in the Arabian Nights, which the owner could at will expand to a size sufficient to cover an army of an hundred thousand men, or contract to a *tente d'abri* just large enough to shelter one man, or be carried on his back. There is some risk attending the safety-valve doctrine. The thing may be propped open so widely and so firmly that the engine cannot retain steam enough to have any power; and it sometimes seems as if it is intended to make the whole boiler pretty much all safety-valve.

On the whole, nothing is safe which does not have the consent of intellect, conscience, and heart, all three, healthfully balanced. The better these three unite, the less danger there is that "the pressure within becomes too great for safety." Moreover, faith in God and the spirit of God in man are not to be inclosed in plates of wrought iron.

In Time of Need.

THE question comes to me, "Do you feel that God will interpose to help His servants in times of exigency?" It seems to come from one who is troubled, and perhaps faint in confidence. Let me be excused for even attempting to reply. And I must first distinguish, for myself, between believing and feeling. I do not, for one, *feel* that degree of confidence which the Word of God makes me *believe*.

When one day a train of platform cars was carrying soldiers through a

Cumberland tunnel, I heard one say, "Is n't this dark?" Another replied, "Never mind, boys, there 's daylight ahead!" Often have I seemed to hear that reply in darkness, and wished we could make it ours. The truth is, the soldiers knew that the end of the tunnel was a mechanical necessity; we see no track before us, and nobody has made one. Yet the word of the Lord says, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Why not believe it? And if we believe it, why not feel it?

Let me venture the suggestion that in God's care of His servants special exigencies are no more necessary occasions for His hand than are all other parts of life. Some places seem to us to be exigencies, but this is because the need seems more pressing than at other times, while really all times are dependent on His help. The whole ground is covered if we believe in God's providential care as a whole, and a Christian cannot doubt that care without doubting the Word of God itself. "Your life is hid with Christ in God" is a great declaration. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things" is but one specification. "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion" is another specification. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God" is another specification. "Grace to help in time of need" is another; and the like assertions cover every division of human wants. But to magnify apparent exigencies may tend to disparage that constant help needed for constant occasions which are silent and unseen. The regular movement of a pendulum is no less necessary because every sixty minutes the clock calls attention to it by striking the hour.

Then, are we forced to a theory of general law as God's method? By no means. If we were, there would still be room for plan and purpose. I remember a little machine my father made for his work, in which, if one end of a coil of wire was inserted, the wire travelled on, untended, a thread was cut in it, it was bent for special use, and, more especially, at steady intervals a cutting tool cut the finished wire into right lengths, and another tool took up each piece and placed it where it was to be used. That cutting tool, as the wire kept on its journey all day long without notice, was its special providence provided beforehand for this province.

But God's work is not merely to oil machinery. The world is not a machine. Life is not wheels, cogs, and pulleys. If God has nothing but machinery for human souls, then there is no God. Illustrate differently. An army corps on a long line of march whose few days' rations soon get exhausted. Will it starve? No. At each of such intervals of exhaustion it finds supplies waiting, sent there on right-angled roads by a provident power supervising. Each commissary train at these junctions is a special providence, but it was part of a plan. Wagon wheels are laws of nature, but the mind which orders them is greater than wheels. I have no faith in any "laws of nature" other than God's method of acting; nor in any theory of God which would leave Him less power to help His children in their need, than a mother has to pick up the little child that has fallen down and hurt itself.

But this is theory. Is it fact? Does daylight always come? It did to Job; is Job's case a rule? Reading his story simply, we find a beautiful illustration in what he says as to seeing God while still in the flesh. Apparently forsaken

by God, still he insists that "although" his body would perish, yet "in my flesh," that is, before he should die, he should "see God"; see Him in lifetime and be vindicated; and his faith was rewarded, because "in the flesh," in the last chapter, "now mine eye seeth Thee." He did see God.

I recall a story of "happenings." If not a great story — I am not writing great things — I knew the case. An officer was beginning to recover from a very serious illness. The army was about to move, and he must be sent away. Accordingly, an ambulance was ordered to take him eight miles to Acquia Creek Hospital, a city of tents, on his way northward. The invalid could not take his servant, and must depend on good fortune, or rather on God, whose care he calmly felt he could trust without a fear, at every critical point in his journey. But the hospital was solely for enlisted men, and there would be no place for him. But when the ambulance drew up before the tent of the medical chief, that official came out, recognized the invalid, and exclaimed: "How fortunate! Surgeon W—— has gone North to-day, and you can have his tent!" The floored tent, the good bed, the white sheets, were a great luxury, left by the surgeon who happened to go North that day.

After some days the invalid must go on. He was taken down to the steamboat wharf. The boat was not a hospital boat, and he was alone. He waited patiently, and suddenly his own brigadier came from many miles away, a particular friend, who saw the situation, had a bed made of a great pile of old tents under an awning, ordered some men to place the invalid on board, and went back to his command. The brigadier had happened there just right.

The long journey up the river to Washington ended, and the boat was made fast to the wharf. It was a mile and a half below the city, and the invalid was too weak to go ashore alone, and, if he did, what next? He waited calmly, and in a few minutes saw on the wharf the ward-master of his own regiment, whom the invalid had left on the Rappahannock. The ward-master had been sent to Washington over the Manassas road with a dozen wounded men, and, with nothing else to do, had strolled down the mile and a half to see the boat come in. Of course, a carriage was at once obtained, and the invalid put into it and taken to Willard's by the ward-master, where his name was enrolled, and he found rest in bed. The ward-master had happened down there at just the right time.

An hour afterwards, the invalid heard a knock at his door. "Come in." Who should enter but a dear friend, a member of the same church with himself in Massachusetts, who was then connected with naval affairs at the capital, and who had, from mere curiosity, stepped into the office at Willard's, and looked down the page of arrivals, and seen the invalid's name. The next day that friend removed him to his own home, where the convalescent man was very happy. The vacant tent, the general on the steam-boat, the ward-master at the landing, and the friend at the hotel register, may all have been accidents; but the wearied sick man, who had committed himself without fear to God's care, somehow believed that God made all these accidents in His goodness, and thanked the Lord as a child would thank his father. The Scripture says: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." This is Bible doctrine.

Two facts ought to be remembered. One is that, while God's kindness is

In Time of Need.

above all deserts, yet he pledges His care only to those who walk in His ways, do the work given to them, and trust Him. "In *all thy ways* acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy path." There is no Biblical warrant for expecting help in exigencies for one who, not serving God at other times, suddenly seeks it for this one occasion. "He that *dwelleth* in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." The other fact is that the relief which we think indispensable may not be the best thing for us. The believing heart must leave the decision to his Heavenly Father, and still believe. Some wants may never be met, and some wrongs never righted, till we reach the other world. Yet, after these qualifications, every minister has seen wonderful reliefs pass under his eyes: some widow's son getting an education; some young man preparing, against almost insuperable obstacles, to preach the gospel; some relief in grave trials. Most men have more faith for others than for themselves. In that faith, at least, I see the warrant for boldness; in attempting great things where Providence seems to forbid; in pushing plans beyond present limited means. Missionary societies have to press forward boldly where the places open and the men offer; almost careless, or rather believing, as to money. Faith plants churches where reason shrinks. Trust in God believes that exigencies are only places to test faith, and to grow strong.

But sometimes the way seems perilous. What then? I once saw a regiment ordered (at least the men not mounted) to cross a river by passing it on a high railroad bridge. There were two or three planks in width on the bridge between the rails. One man looked at it aghast. He could not do it, dizzy, and with musket, knapsack, haversack, and cartridge-box. His file-leader, an old sailor, saw it. "Dizzy?" "Yes; I can't do it." "Give me your musket," said the old sailor. "Rest your hands on my shoulders, *shut your eyes*, and come along!" This was done, and the dizzy man went over safely. We have to shut our eyes sometimes, else we will be dizzy; and we must rest our hands on His arm who bids us go forward.

Something about the Soldiers. 1890.

Memorial Day (May 30) is near at hand, and is likely to show no exception to the increasing public observance which the last few years have witnessed. An autumn haze surrounds the great past, but children eagerly demand stories of bivouac and battle, and the work of caring for survivors outruns the needs. But I am not going to write a war article. Some thoughts, not new to my own mind, about the kind of men whom that period brought into military action, and about the effect their service had upon them then and since as a part of society, may perhaps be in place.

The first men who went to the field were largely volunteers from impulse and adventurous spirit. It was a patriotic impulse, but I do not think that many stopped to deliberate about Constitutional decisions, or the evils of slavery, or went out because they cared for one political party more than

another. In fact, but for men represented by Douglas and Dix, and Stanton, Logan and Butler, the first seventy-five thousand would have been the last. A minister whom I know, who had never preached party politics, although he had denounced the Fugitive Slave Law and the cowardice of the American Tract Society, preached an intense sermon, April 28, 1861. One of his few conservative hearers said to another like him as they went out of church: "Who would have expected that? I should as soon have thought of one's rising from the dead." The other answered quietly, "A good many of us have risen from the dead this last fortnight." The resurrection summons had been the cannon-shot upon the flag in Charleston Harbor, which, while it fired the Southern heart, equally fired the Northern heart. The flag was the symbol of loyalty, and the great mass of people thought of little beyond the flag. With such impulses, there was a generous and uncalculating spirit in the service. Few men stopped to consider what the pay would be, or the hardships, or the perils. The material was therefore principally of a high character.

What was the effect when bounties began to be paid — in the second year, for instance? Not much. The bounties were not large, and really hardly equalized the depreciation of currency. Some of the best material went out that year, when the glamour of war life had greatly diminished, and its romance had lost its first power. Purpose was then more deliberate. There was, however, some prejudice against the receivers of bounties, who, I remember, were sometimes called "the hired men." I recall such facts, and with them an incident in one of the great battles, in which these men were for the first time in action, and did brave service. They had felt the opprobrious epithet, and when some of them, wounded and bleeding, were being carried away, one of them looked up wistfully and said, in a pleading tone, "You won't call us hired men any more, will you?" The emphatic answer came, "No, never"; and they never did. The great bounties subsequently paid were great inducements to a different class; and while some young men went out from noble impulses, in the fourth year, of nine hundred men nominally assigned to one regiment, six hundred escaped on the road to it.

What effect did this life have upon the men? First, the discipline, although sometimes reasonless and arbitrary, yet on the whole had a good result in making many understand, as they never had done, the principle of regularity and obedience. Governor Andrew felicitously said that our army at first was a collection of town meetings. A military discipline brings order out of chaos, and brings the individual into recognizing government and law above his own self-will. All the lessons of order, practically, which many heedless men obtained for the life which was to follow, were had in that service. Nor is it without proof that the knowledge of what true obedience is, unquestioning, implicit, and instant, was brought to men in their conceptions of duty toward God. They dwelt in tabernacles, and also, like Abraham, when the order came, went out not knowing whither they went, and had always to be "ready to move at a moment's notice." Discipline was a great teacher. Habits became a second nature. One day in the Shenandoah Valley, as an instance, a homespun, butternut young man was brought into our camp with strong suspicion that he was a rebel soldier, who, inside our lines, might be a spy. He appeared, however, to be a lounging, awkward lout, who, when questioned by

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Something about the Soldiers.

our colonel, said, in a listless and vacant way, that he was only a farmer's boy, nor could any examination find anything else. At last the colonel said, "I can't waste time on you; wait till I get ready," and turned about other business. After some little time, he suddenly turned to the lout, and sharply said, "Stand attention, there!" Instantly the fellow straightened up in the position of a soldier, heels at the proper angle, head erect, body straight, hands hanging just right. "Ah!" said the colonel, "no soldier, eh?" "You 've got me this time, colonel," said the trained infantry man. Some may like to know that the man proved to be no spy, but could not resist a desire to risk much for the sake of seeing the young woman at home. I wish our theological philosophers would say whether there was a conscious volition which straightened up the young man, when the colonel spoke so suddenly, or a spontaneous contraction of muscles. Anyway, it shows the power of discipline, and if Christian people could get into the same instinct of obedience to God, it would be a happy life.

I should like to speak of the physical effect of the service, but have not space except to say, first, that the moral tone, the pride, the regard due to home, gave vastly more endurance in hardship and danger than huge bodily proportions did. A salesman from behind a counter, a college boy, or a mother's slender pet, would endure more than a gigantic lumberman. And, secondly, when legislation is being considered — while I do not favor promiscuous pensioning — there is some excuse for liberality in the fact that very few men who served any considerable period have not some reminders of it. How much demoralization of life has resulted? is a frequent question. My own belief is that it is less than if this service had never taken place. A great principle and great seif-denial never demoralize. Circumstances may. But let any one tell me what more opportunity for drunkenness there was in a well-disciplined regiment in the field than there was in the streets of Boston, where twenty-five hundred open public bars were sanctioned by the Commonwealth. For the demoralizing of those now demoralized, the legalized temptations of these past years may be held reasonably responsible. On the other hand, look at facts. See the vast numbers of able business men who did service in the field, or on the war-decks. Go to the colleges and seminaries, ask Brown and Andover, and Dartmouth and Harvard, for their corps of instruction. Go into the workshops, and take the census of old soldiers. I go into some great stores in Boston just to grasp the hands of men of my old regiment. I look at the list of lawyers, and I there find from the same body successful pleaders. I go into the shops near me, and I find industrions and respected artisans with whom I once lived in daily contact. Some of my comrades are the most faithful men in the Post Office and in the Custom House. One of them makes his mark in Congress. Three of them became ministers.

Or, nearer to me just now, in my own young church. Two of the first three deacons were soldiers, and another soldier has now taken the place of one of them. The clerk of my church was a soldier. Our Sunday school superintendent was in that grand charge of Stannard's Brigade, which swept from Cemetery Hill down through Pickett's Division and destroyed it. A well-known teacher of young men in my Sunday school, and a mainstay in mission work,

was a soldier, as was the present teacher of our large adult class, who is also chairman of our building committee, and the clerk of that committee was another soldier. I mention only officials. They were all boys in war time, and these are now just in their prime; and others in the rank and file of my church and congregation were soldiers also. Go through our churches and you will ascertain similar facts. I want to say more, but my space is filled.

Concerning Little Kindnesses.

A DOZEN years ago I was driving over some picturesque, but rather hard, New Hampshire hills of a range in which Blue Job is the most prominent. I was going to Snackerty. How did the place get that name? Though it was but two miles from my birthplace I was long in the dark about this. But an aged uncle of mine happened to tell me of an old soldier who once lived in that hollow, and who, he said, talked so much about a place in New York State that the people came to give its name to this locality. I meditated awhile, and "Schenectady" flashed upon my vision! Yes, I was right. My uncle said so. Now, on the day I began to speak about, I walked up the long hill beside my horse, and was glad to find, part way up, a roadside watering-tub placed there under the humane New Hampshire laws. It was under some trees, and a wooden pipe brought the coolest and purest of water out from under the rocky hill. But there was something more. Resting upside down upon two stakes driven into the ground were two cups, shaped like a child's silver mug, and made of the sweetest and cleanest birch bark. No house was near. I do not know who made those cups, but the stitches showed the handiwork of some girl who had made these cups for the comfort of unknown wayfarers like myself. I hope that girl has a happy home. Her thoughtfulness, in this little kindness, makes me bless her memory.

Little things can add much to human happiness. Little things are sometimes heroic. I have often wished that our Sunday school literature could make much of historic stories like that of Sir Philip Sydney, who, being mortally wounded under the walls of Zutphen, called for water, but who, when they brought it, told them to give it untasted to a wistful private soldier suffering like himself. "Thy necessity," said the gallant Christian gentleman and true soldier, "is yet greater than mine." Our young people should be nurtured upon food like this. One such incident is worth a hundred ordinary volumes. Can such things be imitated? Yes; boys can appreciate the act of Sir Philip, for boys appreciate the heroic. But an able-bodied boy, who will not give his seat in a street car to a woman with a bundle or a baby, will never be a Sydney.

Just in this line. Last year I saw in a street car a youth, with much length of limb, who wore upon his head the cap of the Boston High School Regiment, and was evidently an officer therein, comfortably seated between two girls, with whom he was pleasantly chatting. A large number of men and women were standing, and tired women were holding on to the straps above their heads, but this gallant son of Massachusetts contentedly sat mile after mile, and was still sitting when I left the car at my home. His instructor in military

science would doubtless have put him back into the ranks, as being unworthy of a commission, and as disgracing his military badge. To be a gentleman is the first duty of an officer. I was glad that his home was not in my neighborhood, but my Sunday school had the benefit of the lesson at its next session.

That young man had a legal right to his seat, but he could have relieved some weary person. The doctrine of human rights is altogether overdone. One's rights are of far less consequence than one's righteousness, and one's righteousness is far less honorable than one's sacrifice. Have you not noticed that when ministers stand up for their rights they begin to lose their privileges? If a pastor cannot trust to the generous kindness of a people, it is better for him to go elsewhere. Most people know, however, that little kindnesses touch the minister's heart. So they do everybody's heart. But little kindnesses require thoughtfulness. It is a kind thing for a person who has horses and carriages to take a less fortunate neighbor, who is in delicate health, out for a drive. I'm afraid some who have the ability are not thoughtful of this, and I am also afraid that some who do think of it are apt to take out the neighbor who has horses or money, rather than the neighbor who has neither. Go yourself, and don't send your coachman. A little thought will give happiness and comfort to somebody, at little or no cost. A few buds in a sick-room are gospel. They are more than beauty, they are the expression of Christian love.

And the flowers remind me of what I often see. Living in a suburban ward of a great city, where there are still some fields and pastures, I see throngs of persons coming out for the air on Sundays and holidays. Many of them are pale from the toil of close streets. Mothers bring out their little children. It is particularly touching to see them at evening, especially young girls on their return, carefully holding some wild flowers, which others call weeds, or boughs of wild blossoms, but all usually wilting already, and yet tenderly held. A policeman told me last Sunday of the frequent request, "Won't you please tell us where you will let us pick some wild flowers?" and the man with a heart under his uniform points out uninclosed lands and tells them he thinks nobody will disturb them there. They gather the "white weed" which the farmers detest, and call the flowers daisies. A wistful child will see flowers in some one's premises, and will timidly ask, "Won't you please give me one flower?" I am afraid they do not always get what the owner has really no use for. These facts suggest the natural thirst there is for pure air and daisies. Regular sermons and quartettes, brethren, will get worsted in every competition with white weed and buttercup. Is there no way of putting them together? The "open air fund" and the "flower mission" are just in this line where small contributions are doing a vast amount of good. Put your Sunday school children into the flower work this summer.

There is a deep principle in this matter of little kindnesses. They are a duty. One may say he is under no obligation to give some flowers to a sick-room, but he is mistaken. He owes the gift of those flowers, not to the sick neighbor or the crippled child, but he owes it to himself to do it. The girl who made the birch bark cups owed it to her own unselfish nature. It was a duty to herself. When one says that the Lord Jesus was under no obligation to redeem men by his suffering, it is a mistake. The Lord was under obliga-

tion to do it; not under obligation to the sinner, but under obligation to His own great soul. One has no right to limit himself by his rights. Love makes duties.

I may as well parallel the case of Sydney with another. My friend Wilder Dwight — we slept under the same blanket in the open air the night before Antietam — lay mortally wounded in that battle. The surgeon came to him as he lay suffering. The Christian man pointed to other wounded men lying near, and ordered, "Attend to them first; I can bear it better than they can."

Opportunity.

A New Hampshire Indian, by some uncommon mischance, forgot the exact locality of his hut. "You are lost, are you?" said a white man. "No," answered the Indian energetically, and striking his breast, "Indian not lost, wigwam lost; Indian here!" The idea of the noble red man was perhaps equally well expressed by a boy of six years who was with me in a light wagon, driving across some New Hampshire hills and valleys, on a road where he had been once or twice before. I stopped on a bridge to look up the swollen stream of Mad River, whose autumn waters were, for quite a distance in view, tossing wildly over the rocks, with forest trees on either side. "Do you know where you are?" said I to the boy. "Yes," he answered with a slight tinge of contempt. "Well, where are you?" "Right here!" Both of them, the savage and the boy, embodied the idea that a man is himself, and that the place is but an external incident. The Indian would have been an Indian as much in a palace as in the lost wigwam. The boy on Mad River bridge was no other than the boy who reached home that night.

It is, of course, then, easy to theorize upon independence of place and circumstances; to say that native ability will force itself into position, and that a man can be what he determines to be. There are aspects in which this is true. Bunyan dreamed his dream in Bedford jail, Paul and Silas sang praises in the Philippi prison. Burns wrote the "Cotter's Saturday Night," although he never was poet-laureate. But there is a limit to the application of any theory which disregards the necessity of opportunity to the person.

Circumstances, that is, surroundings, may or may not allow character to develop, or give a suitable field for action. Instead of surroundings, perhaps I ought to say "environment," which is now the scientific word superseding surroundings, and which sounds much more grand, just as "heredity" is the acceptable form of saying, —

> "In Adam's fall
> We sinned all."

The old truths will come back, and "heredity" is "original sin" sugar-coated for scientific purposes, and "environment" attracts a great many people who are above saying "surroundings." But however we may cull it, circumstances do practically, and necessarily, limit individual power. Nor is it fair to say that the individual is to blame for not conquering circumstances. A man without any fault of his may be exposed to the malaria hidden in the soft

Opportunity.

silvery mist of some Southern river at night, and he is powerless to overcome the disease. Many a child is exposed to a moral malaria which he did not create, which he did not understand, and which he never knowingly accepted, but which he inevitably imbibed. All the abstract arguments in the world about free will and voluntary choices, and all the pompous declarations that he should assert the native dignity of his glorious manhood, are nonsense in the ears of a man of practical common sense. The child had no opportunity to be anything but what he is. The remedy must take that fact into consideration and give him opportunities. A child of Mohammedan parents, taught his father's religion, and never hearing of anything else, will grow up a believer in the Arabian prophet, and he is not to blame for it. Ought he to be a Christian? "And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" The wise philanthropists in our cities aim to open opportunities to better things than they find. Bad homes, bad streets, desperate poverty, unhealthy localities and open temptations practically bar improvement.

There are persons who say that any one can get rich. Those who say it, I have noticed, are usually those who have pinched in the meanest manner, driven hard bargains on the smallest scale, and have never given a cent's worth to the poor. But their statement is not true. Circumstances in life present the possibility of wealth to most people. Peculiar combinations of circumstances are necessary for the accumulation of wealth. True, a genius in that line will see such combinations, and avail himself of them. But the combinations must be there. Moreover, the hint given by James commencing, "Go to now," is significant. There are also those who could administer wealth wisely and well, who could enjoy it in gratifying tastes and improving the minds, and who could and would do a vast amount of good in benefactions, but who have not, and never will have, the opportunity. There are fitnesses for high station which cannot be attained. There are longings for development which duty itself will not allow. I recall the case of a son whose father died, and upon whose sense of duty was thrown the care of his mother and the younger children, and who for this reason gave up his cherished plan for the liberal education which he would have honored. A wealthy man once told me that he would gladly give a hundred thousand dollars to have his name on a college roll, with all that its four years of study meant, but it had been impossible. It was easy for me to tell him that God had doubtless done better for him in giving him a royal heart, and the wealth which that heart used.

Who supposes that the fittest men, as a rule, are in public stations? Persons best qualified often have no opportunities. Without these opportunities the achievement is impossible. Moreover, there must be a field for the ablest men, or even the ablest men cannot do the work for which they are qualified. There is not the slightest doubt that, by some combination of circumstances, some of the ablest preachers are in obscure places. I could specify more than one such case. Fortunately, we do not understand the relative importance of positions, nor know what minds in those retired places needed the very teachers whom God put there to develop great men and saintly women. After all, to do one's

duty in the place to which God has called him finds the opportunity which God thought sufficient.

I do not forget the suggestion with which I commenced. I thought I could quote what I supposed Daniel Webster had said, but I cannot verify it, and think it must have been from some other man. He was replying to the appeal of an opposing lawyer, who asked pity for his client on account of the prison cell and the dock. "Yes," was the substance of the reply; "he needs pity, not for *where* he is, but for *what* he is."

Opportunities are thrown away upon one who has not natural ability, energy, and the instinct which understands the occasion. On the other hand, the abilities must have the opportunities.

And one can imagine how comparatively unimportant the life of even a great man might have been but for opportunities not of his making. Years ago I saw upon the county records in a Virginia court house, long since destroyed by fire, two entries. The one was, "The mark of Mr. G. Washington his sheep," which was described; the other, "The mark of Mr. G. Washington his flour," which was also described. Though Washington had all the qualities of the greatest man of his age, the opportunities were necessary to exhibit them. But for the war in Europe and the necessary French war in America, and therefore the stamp act and the tax on tea, he must have remained an estimable Virginia planter, "Mr. G. Washington," raising sheep and grinding wheat into flour.

My Friend.

Nov. 20, 1890.

THEY think it is proper for me to write something about Henry Martyn Dexter. I do not know. The friendship beginning thirty-seven years ago, and of many late years intimate in closeness, perhaps demands it. I knew the man, knew him as very few did. I had his confidence and he had mine. The loss to me is a sharp one.

I saw him on Tuesday, before he died Thursday. It was the last day he was in Boston, and I called at his desk as I did regularly on his Boston days. There was almost always something to consult about. "Here," said he, "hear this letter!" And he read, with a smile, an abusive letter about an editorial, such a letter as the writer, if he has any heart, must now grieve over in hopeless sorrow. "What do you think of that?" "Oh, a bantam cockerel," said I. He folded it and laid it away with the same smile. Such was his greatness of soul that he never let such things weigh. He would have done that silly minister a favor the next moment just the same as ever. He had such letters when the writers and he happened to differ in judgment. Then he said, "Now see how I've been abusing *you;*" and he showed me the "proof" of a very kind allusion, and expressed the warmest regret that I was to be in another State till next summer. "How I shall miss you," he said. Ah, me! And then, "And you have been doing the foolishest thing you ever did in your life!" He meant his election to preach at London next year. I said to him, "Remember that this is the highest honor the Congregational churches of the

My Friend.

world can give you." "That is just it," he said, with the humblest tone, "and I am not worthy of it, or fit for it." But he promised to think of it.

When I graduated at Andover, a part which I gave met a kind word in his paper. It touched my heart. Soon after we were in the same ministerial association, and like tastes, historically and denominationally, brought us together. He was nine years my senior in the ministry and that seemed then a generation. We were in the Library Association in the same early year, and our names have stood together in its list of officers nearly every year for thirty years past, and on its library committee these many years. We commenced together the "Congregational Quarterly" in 1859. We were together members of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and thirty years in a semi-private club of a few ministers. I was the moderator of the council which dismissed him in 1867 for his full editorship. We were on many ecclesiastical councils together — great ones like Brooklyn, New York, Philadelphia, Washington — in fact, it became quite a habit to take both of us, if one was called. I believe we never differed in a final result save in one instance. He was, in 1880, also moderator of our National Council, which won his regard rather slowly but at last completely.

Nobody knows the number of letters which came to him for advice in some church or minister's trouble. I knew of many, as he came to have rather a habit of laying them aside for consultation, as I did with the large number coming to me also. No one can know, except myself, the unwearied patience of his studies and replies, and his uniform efforts to secure peace. The least known had as courteous a reply as the greatest. We did not always agree in our Congregationalism. He inherited, with his blood, a reverence for Massachusetts and Plymouth early ways. I had not a drop of the blood of either, only the more free spirit of New Hampshire. He honored precedent; I cared little for it. But we agreed in advice. I admire to-day the kind patience of that eminent man to the tales of trial which came to him.

Dr. Dexter was, as I have hinted, of a little earlier generation. He was with Richard S. Storrs, George B. Little, Leonard Swain, John O. Means, Andrew L. Stone, Huntington Clapp, and Edwin B. Webb. What names these are! Some of these men went home long ago. I have reason to think that perhaps his tenderest friendship was with Dr. Storrs, and it was continued to the last week of his life. Little, if any, less was his attachment to Dr. Clapp. And how tenderly he used to speak of Means! He had a great heart. He never had any jealousies, or ambitions for place or honors. He preferred others to himself. I know what I am saying.

He always depreciated himself as a preacher. But let any one read the thirteen sermons printed in connection with some pastoral work, and they will find as choice sermonizing, as clear thought, as fertile illustration, as tender a gospel spirit, as any church in this land ever needs. Nor did people who saw him as a controversialist know the man. One must be somewhat of a controversialist if he edits a great paper. But that is no more the real man than the head of a machine shop is, without seeing his little children climbing over him. He had a most tender heart. I never heard an unkind word regarding any man, even in the midst of controversies, and he discussed with me the most

important. As to his spirit, I remember once we were at a hotel, in connection with an important council. Our rooms were adjoining with a door between. After quite a discussion I was going to my room. "Stop," said he, "let 's say our prayers together, to-night." And we did, and his was as simple as a child's. He believed in prayer. And right here, I never saw in him anything which seemed to be other than perfectly conscientious. If he was otherwise he hid it from me.

There was a massive simplicity about him which one could but reverence. He was massive every way. His mind had that characteristic; his heart had it. But I used to respect his guileless honesty. The nearer one came to him the more he woke up to feel that this man was a great man, who would stand out greater and greater as years go by. One help to it was his deep and great faith in God. He never seemed to care for expedients. He saw a great object, and believed that God would bring it to pass, and that all that rested on the man was to see his duty and do it. This brought him into antagonism sometimes with friends, but he could not help it. It was not policy, it was right. Where a dory tosses up and down, a great ship is steady.

I think I knew him well as a member of my New Bedford church. He occupied my pulpit awhile, and was thus attracted to the place. He did me the honor to say that he moved to that city largely on my account, but I think a strong attraction was when he found that his mother, sainted Mary Morton, was a member of that church in her maiden days. He was a grand parishioner, kind, considerate, helpful, and so he was to my successor. I knew his heart in those days, and of the discipline he had had in sorrow. And when his son was ordained, who could forget the father's address to the son, or his tender recollections of his own honored father, Elijah Dexter?

He made no boast of charities, but he was systematic in giving, and liberal. A few years ago he chanced to let slip an allusion to a gift: "The fact is," he said, apologetically, "I found my income this year greater than I had calculated, and I had to dispose of the surplus."

Perhaps we discussed matters of denominational interest as thoroughly as was possible. I knew his spirit. He took broad views. He looked carefully forward. He considered affairs in every light, and then, deciding, he went forward. If any person supposes that Dr. Dexter followed impulse, or acted without careful consideration or sufficient consultation, he is mistaken. He knew what he was doing, and no man understood better than he did the popular need.

One fact was especially plain. He was growing old gracefully. His faith was mellow. I think he cared somewhat less for logic and more for the fruits of the Spirit. Perhaps this was unconscious. His beliefs merely ripened, but they never ossified. There was the proper amount of iron in the blood, but he did not turn into cast iron or try to force others into cast-iron molds. It was a serene age for him; if he had lived, an age which children would have continued to love; but he "was translated that he should not see death."

What She Could.

We used to discuss, in the theological school, questions of human ability and human responsibility with remarkable earnestness. Some of the methods and forms of discussion look to me now like the exercise which we used to take in our odd hours in pitching loggerheads. The *loggerheads*, so called, were heavy sticks we had, shaped much like decanters, which we threw at a mark. The exercise required much use of muscle and precision in throwing, and the result of the exercise was good. But we did not bring the loggerheads away with us when we left school, neither have most men brought into the pulpit or practical life the loggerheads which exercised our mental powers. The strengthening and sharpening results, it is hoped, have remained and been useful, but no one could find any special use for the loggerheads themselves; still there is a deep, practical question as to duty, and its acceptance by the Heavenly Father, in its relation to the ability with which we have been endowed. I do not think that practical people have any theoretical difficulty in their understanding of this matter. I do not think that practical people have any difficulty as to theories of perfection. The perfection of purpose, which is ideal, is necessarily without flaw. The perfection of practice is in that sense absolutely unattainable. No artist ever yet did justice to his ideal, or, if he did, it was evident that his powers had begun to wane. No Christian ever yet did justice to his ideal of Christian life, if his ideal was fit for the Master to look upon. To make the ideal practical is the great object and the great difficulty. How does our Lord look upon it? "What she could" is the plain answer. Whether a person who has put himself by his own folly in a position where he cannot do what he might have done, if he had taken a different course, is guilty of not doing what he has made himself unable to do, used to be one of the questions of the loggerhead style. Let that pass.

Practically the question of acceptance by our Lord clearly depends upon the purpose of the heart made operative according to our reasonable ability. The two mites of the widow have been quoted and misquoted an infinite number of times. I remember one of a church of which I was pastor who said, on a given occasion, "Yes, I am ready to give my mite for this object. The widow's mite was blessed, you know." To whom I replied: "Oh, no, no! We do not need your mite — the widow's mite was half her living, and half of your property would no doubt be a quarter of a million dollars — twenty-five dollars will do you for this time," which, however, we did not get. Perhaps his idea of the widow's mite was that two mites make a farthing.

The results of service which may seem to be very feeble may, on the Lord's principle, be remarkably efficacious. I have a profound conviction that the Master blesses with wonderful power the gift and the effort which, in themselves, seem very small, but which come from a devoted purpose. I have a strong belief in some special power, not depending upon the intrinsic value of the effort or the gift, which is a consecrated purpose. My mind turned in this direction at the recent great missionary meeting held at Minneapolis. I heard a member say, after its close: "What we need to settle all questions is another great legacy. Don't you know some one," he said to a pastor, "who will put

in his will a million dollars for the Board?" This was in view, of course, of the fact that the great "Swett and Otis" legacies are, according to the purpose of the Board, soon to be exhausted, which now furnish about one hundred and forty thousand dollars a year. But is this the best view to take of the situation? Is it wise for the Missionary Board to place reliance upon million-dollar gifts? Even if we were sure that such would come, — and we know that they would be wonderfully convenient, — does the strength of the cause lie in enormous legacies, whose original owners have gone into another world, or, in comparison therewith, in the hundred thousand donors, whose self-denial and prayers accompany their gifts in this life? The Board very wisely ordained that the two great legacies mentioned should be exhausted in special work at an early day. The Board cannot afford to have permanent funds to any great extent. Income from permanent funds is convenient, but it is not the strength of the cause. Railroad stocks and bank shares do not read the Bible nor letters from missionaries, nor do they pray. The prayers of the givers go up with the gifts before God, and the strength of this work is in the multitude of humble people, who, if they cannot give great sums, give self-denial and love and prayers. This does not imply that rich men ought not to contribute according to their greater means, and accompany that gift with the same faith and the same love. It is their great privilege, but we do not lose sight of the principle, that the weak things are strong when the Lord blesses them, and the Lord blesses the things which seem weak in the eye of the world, when they have in them the love which Christ has kindled in the heart.

Where do the most contributions for missionary purposes come from? And why not from a wider field and from a more thorough cultivation of the sparce places? There are 4,500 Congregational churches in the United States. Less than 2,300 churches are found upon the list of givers in either of the two financial years ending in 1888 and 1889. If it be said that most of the non-giving churches are comparatively small, which is not true of all, yet is it not important that missionary spirit be diffused among all these small churches? In the giving churches themselves, is it not possible for pastors, and others who love this work, to succeed in obtaining some gift, however small, from a much greater number of persons than now contribute? I am perfectly sure that I speak the sentiment of the officers of the Board when I say that this has been the earnest desire of their hearts, and to accomplish which they have given much patient effort. A far more extended list of donors would bring much money into the treasury, and with the money would bring, it is hoped, much prayer. The Lord will honor the small gifts which correspond with the ability of the givers, and the touching facts which glorify some gifts which cost much are largely the strength of this work. The little donation may perhaps be the greatest. It depends largely upon pastors to make this understood and to secure practical results. If the 140,000 poor people, who have not felt called upon to contribute, would each give one dollar, when the dollar means something to them, the mission treasury would be relieved, and, more than that, there would be that number of people receiving a blessing while strengthening the hosts of faith.

I have had some observation for a few years past of the system of weekly

What She Could.

offerings for the support of public worship. It is a perfectly remarkable success. This system is that of pledged amounts placed in envelopes every Sunday. But perhaps the most delightful feature has been to see children giving to the collectors their envelopes which inclose their own little pledge — maybe two cents a week. It is their own earned money. These same children and young people are now enthusiastically earning money to give for the erection of the new church edifice. The leaders wisely approve of this plan. The boys and girls will feel that they own a share in the new-built house. They will never cease to love that house, and they will have the blessing which comes to those who do what they can. It will be truly a house blessed of God. Some men are giving out their thousands, and perhaps in doing it they really sacrifice, but they rejoice that the children's names will be upon the same roll. The consecrated roll has in it two elements — the one, that of amounts of money necessary for the work; the other, that of the proportion of faith and self-denial lying between the money and the giver.

Upon a greater scale, but on the same principle, is the question of how far God is satisfied with human service. From one point of view nothing but absolute perfection can be appropriate, but this is simply unattainable by human beings. Men have tried to discriminate between different kinds of perfection. The result is naturally a jargon of definitions jostling each other and confusing practical, religious work. Many good souls have been sadly distressed and worried by such discussions. Moreover, the rightful longing of every right-minded soul to be fitted for the sight of the Master is the great aspiration and inspiration. But, after all, does the approval of the Master rest upon a precise result attained without taking into account the heart of the worker? Does the Master forget the effort and trial and labor which are embodied in the result?

One of my children, some years ago, in my absence, made and sent to me a little pocket pin-holder — two pieces of enameled leather with a piece of pasteboard between the two. Suppose some one says: "Do you call that pin-holder round? Swing round a pair of dividers and see how uneven this is." "No," I answer; "my little girl's five-year-old fingers did this, and there never was anything so round in all the world." "But," he says, "see these stitches. You do not call them even, do you? How much better a sewing machine would do it." "No," I say again; "a sewing machine did not make these stitches. My little girl's fingers did this sewing, and no stitches in the world were ever so perfect as these are. Love did this work. Dividers and sewing machines do not do love's work. What love does is perfect, and there never was such a pin-holder anywhere made as the pin-holder which the dear little girl made, without any help, for her absent father." Jehovah is our Father.

Not Now.

A COLLEGE classmate of mine, at an examination upon some treatise of Paley, was called on to speak as to pain in the light of God's goodness. He had the usual few minutes to think. His first answer was natural, that pain sounded the alarm as to existing disease. With a desperate effort he achieved a second statement, that people who suffered pain a long time doubtless came to enjoy it. His views did not meet with favor. The great problem of suffering has perplexed others besides my classmate. The law of cause and effect often has no relation to it. Not that the suffering itself is causeless, but that it affects those who have in no way offended, or in any way led to its existence. A child is killed by a railway collision when the father was a thousand miles away. "Cause and effect" does not explain why the father justly suffers for no fault. Events in our lives — disasters, burdens — perplex us and try our faith.

One of our most beautiful hymns is that commencing: —

"While Thee I seek, protecting power."

It is no less touching in itself than in its relation to the patient Christian woman out of whose experiences it came. A life which had its great burden of care and sorrow, sustained by the sweetest faith and the deepest consecration, was necessary to create this hymn. Hymns which live are born of Christian life. In this hymn are two wonderful lines: —

"In each event of life how clear
Thy ruling hand I see."

She said this truthfully. God had given her the spiritual insight which authorized it. Some of His chosen ones, specially chastened and purified, have this insight. Can all use these lines in their full meaning? No. Can I do it? That is, can I see in each event of life the hand and purpose of God? No. Many others must honestly say the same. It is a special grace, a wonderful, spiritual power, when one does see as that favored woman saw.

Sometimes we see in part. Sometimes a special providence is unmistakable. We can always seek to profit by the event even when we do not understand it. But is it a sign of an un-Christian spirit when we do not see? I think that many persons have been needlessly troubled because they do not understand the particular purpose of God in each event of their lives. They have sometimes been taught to think that unless they do see the direct intent which God had in some trial, for instance, they are not receiving it in a spirit of grace. Just what God means by it, just what particular phase of life it is meant to affect, or what special course in life it is meant to order, intensely absorbs their thought. This theory has grievously disturbed the hope of good Christians whom I have known. It has sometimes made persons morbid. They are looking for too many particulars. They are trying to find indications where no indications appear. The *fact* that God's hand is in every event which comes to a believer's life is one thing; that he should *see* that hand in each particular event is a far different thing. The Lord bids me rejoice in believing the former; He does not require the latter. The good comes to the believer, not from seeing the method of God's government and

Not Now.

guidance, but in the perfect trust which rejoices in that guidance. With all the merits of our New England system of doctrinal life it has had the disadvantage of admitting nothing which could not be formulated, divided and subdivided, and split into numbered sections, with the consequent evil of supposing that no good could come to the soul except through this analytical process and succession of processes. God has a shorter way. His spiritual influence flows directly into the believer's heart. The believer is not required to know the methods and subtle connections of the mighty power of the Infinite. The sunshine warms the child and makes him happy, and the cold chills the child and makes him unhappy, when he knows nothing of the philosophy of heat or cold. The believer believes; he need not chide himself when he cannot analyze. The rainbow shows the separated colors and the sunlight does not, but the sunlight gives warmth and the rainbow does not.

When I was young in the special work of my life, I used to think that I must ascertain the reason of every trial which came to the afflicted, and must tell the afflicted what God embodied in it. I gave that up long ago. If they ask me now, I can only say, make Christ your hiding place, and there wait. God will reveal by His Spirit what special object He had, if it is needful to be revealed. Looking back over a series of years, it is probable that you will see some particular results which will show why God did lovingly what He did. Sometimes, indeed, you will see at once the special hand, but one must live close to the Master, by a living faith, to be sure that he sees correctly; and even one who lives closest to his Master may be told to wait in ignorance and believe. One must not worry because he does not understand. We walk by faith. The trusting believer sees an unseen hand and he hears an unheard voice. That is faith.

Another form of appeal which sometimes needlessly distresses Christian people is that they must see and feel that any particular event is "for the best." "You feel, of course," once said a minister to a person whom I knew, whose only child was just buried, "that this loss is for the best." "No," was the reply; "I do *not* feel that it was for the best." The reply was right. It is a cruel thing to insist that persons shall feel that a misfortune so sad is for the best. It is not necessary to true resignation. That God can be trusted, in His perfect love, to do what is best for His chosen, the disciple should feel. But this leads him away from the event up to God. This is not the same as realizing that this isolated misfortune is something desirable. Perhaps, when years have passed away, that father could realize that through the event God enabled him to take the hand of every parent whose child in like manner lay in the coffin. He knew what it meant. He cannot say, even now, that the lost life might not have been a mighty one for good in this world. That he must leave to God. But the one thing mentioned he can see, and moreover the apostle says: "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." But God qualifies His chosen for special work.

A great and good man is suddenly taken from this life. He was in the prime of his power and usefulness. Was he not doing service for the kingdom of God upon the earth? Was not the loss of his knowledge and experience

irreparable? Then why was it? I do not know. Does anybody know? Is it wrong not to know? I want to murmur. How can I prevent it? By trying to see what God meant by it? No; I am too ignorant. My duty and my privilege are simply to believe that God knows what He is doing. My ignorance is not at fault. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him." I trust Him, and not my imperfect guess work. If I saw, it would not be faith.

The spiritual sight of the author of the beautiful hymn was a gift to a pure, chastened, and sanctified heart. Shall those who do not see as fully as she saw lose their faith thereby? Shall they distress themselves because they cannot see the hand of God and His purpose in the trials? Shall they doubt the favor of God to them because they do not perceive the intrinsic excellence of some pain? Shall they be disturbed when injudicious people insist on a resignation which is callousness? No. I do not believe that the Heavenly Father minds what some would call murmuring any more than a mother does her little child's temporary fretfulness. She soothes the child. She says he will know better by and by.

Many of the readers of this paper have suffered during the year which is fast coming to its close, to whom the trial is a mystery. They should not worry because they do not understand, nor distress themselves in analyzing the purpose of God. "*Not now.*" "What I do thou knowest not now." So He expects us to be ignorant. Then he does not blame us for our ignorance. But He promises knowledge in due time. "Thou shalt know hereafter." Patience, then. I recall a weary night march through a long valley in Georgia. The night was dark, the mists were dense and heavy and cold. We followed our guide in silence. But glad were we when, toward the morning, we began to ascend, and the gray began to appear. Just as we stood at last on the high table-land the sun came up in his splendor and the cold passed away with the darkness, and we looked backward and saw the mists which filled the valley and through which we had passed, and they were all below us, and we went on and saw them no more.

Growing Old Gracefully.

Jan. 1, 1891.

I HAVE been thinking of the date of this paper, and the words of an old hymn have kept sounding in my ears — a hymn sung by my college class at its last attendance upon "prayers," and which I suppose is still sung on every such annual occasion, and has been for a hundred years. The tune to which it was sung was strange and not found in modern books, but I remember that it was familiar to my mother. The hymn was Charles Wesley's and began: —

"Come, let us anew
Our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.
His adorable will
Let us gladly fulfil,
And our talents improve
By the patience of hope and the labor of love."

When one's son has taken his turn in singing the same old hymn, in the same circumstances, one begins to see the lapse of years. Is it, however, a hint to look backward and dwell upon the past, or to look forward? Looking forward, which I assume to be the answer, what does it mean as to the kind and spirit of future years? Idleness? No. My college class of thirty men (in which I was the youngest and only a boy) is represented in present vigorous service by professors in colleges and theological schools, by judges of a supreme and lower courts, by legal counsel of immense corporations, by others in great benevolent activities, in the highest medical practice, at the head of colossal manufacturing interests, in Congress, and in active ministerial duty. I speak only of men now doing their full work, and leave to their silence other voices which sang that day. And yet not a few persons who are now vigorous will soon have to contemplate the question of what kind the sunset life is to be; that is, in spirit and in temper. Growing old gracefully is worth thinking about and determining upon.

It is apparent that it may be and may not be, even in Christian life. That there are dangers I suppose everyone knows. Grace, meaning the grace of God, may exist where grace, meaning spirit and temper, may not be the sweetest. There are disappointments, and men may brood over them until the spirit becomes tinged, at least, with moroseness. Men become superseded in service by younger men, as is natural, but this natural drift is not received kindly. It is in fact very hard to find somebody taking the place which we think we are still amply qualified to fill. Very likely the habits of mind have become so fixed, like the stiffness of joints, as to make more flexible powers indispensable, and yet it is difficult for one set aside to admit the fact. There may be rigidity of formal beliefs which have become intensified by years, and the needs of the times are unseen and unfelt, and the honest and conscientious man is aggrieved because the world has drifted away from him, even though it drifts in God's channel. It is a sad fact that the drift never returns to pick up stranded men. Who was that theological professor who could not understand why the students did not like his lectures, when, as he said, "the students used

to like them twenty-five years ago, and I haven't altered a single sentence since?" Did he accept his position gracefully? I do not know. But it is certain that it may not be easy to grow old gracefully with all these things tending to make one feel that he is not indispensable. It is none the less difficult, perhaps, for persons to acquiesce kindly when their own consciousness tells them that they have not the physical ability they once had, nor can wisely endure the strain of mind which once was play to them; that fightings are no longer their strength, nor fitted to their higher experience; and that the power of repose in calmness and gentleness best suits the work they have to do. To keep life sweet and gentle must needs require the grace which is from above to give grace to the life which is below.

It would be a sad thing if any good man's later years were allowed by himself to be unhappy for himself, uncomfortable to others, and to close unregretted. There might be reason for it if disappointment or seeming neglect could warrant a sour or peevish spirit. But did it do any good? Who suffered thereby? Did it avenge the man? Did it make him any more useful? Did any one love him any better for it? Did he regain any power by it? Did it make his home any more like heaven? And did he have in his own soul a sweeter peace and greater enjoyment?

You can recall the names of soldiers in our Civil War who, offended because not given the rank, or place, or terms they wanted, demanded to be relieved of command. In their disgust they thought they were confounding the nation. But they were relieved, and war went on, and armies marched, and victory came without them.

Beautiful lives in advancing years are common. On the whole, they may be expected. What a beautiful life, so genial, so tender, and yet so massive, was that of Mark Hopkins after he had retired from the headship of his college, and yet continued work which has made his name so honored and loved! How gracefully one, whom I need not mention here, was planning his gradual modification of labor, growing in kindness, broadening in sympathies, and ripening in faith! Large-minded and large-hearted men with Christian faith do not become narrow, controversial, or bigoted as their place and work change with years. They are not jealous. They are not cynical. They are not dictatorial. They do the work for which they come to be adapted, and do it cheerfully. They welcome the new workers, and are glad that the Lord has such a succession. This thought does not limit itself to persons great in history. It affords a principle upon which all persons, whatever be their station or ability, can develop similar lives. I suppose it will require considerable grace, but may God save us from a cross-grained and sulky old age! I wonder if two things may not help in growing old gracefully. One is to keep in sympathy with young life, and especially with the life of children. That life is contagious. Old people from whom children turn away have not grown old gracefully. The other hint is that life will be sweeter if those growing old will continue to be useful — modestly useful if need be. A man who has left public service in the church even may be a delightful help by his gentleness of manner, his unselfishness of thought, his warm, prayerful spirit, his richness of faith, his readiness to give wise counsel. Such an old person is a blessing in a home and a blessing in a church. He can be beloved, reverenced,

Growing Old Gracefully.

cherished, and invaluable. Or one can be fretful, disappointed, feel neglected, become disgusted, and go off to another church where nobody cares for him.

Lives entirely past active service are often beautiful. I think of an old man, down by the sea, whom I used to find Sunday afternoons with his Bible and Watts' hymns, and his face glistening, and a Christian woman, past her three score years and ten, whose sweet faith was such that the children loved her and her large type Testament and Psalms. And how many more! The readers of this paper will summon up their faces. It was the large type Testaments and Psalms that made the beauty, and the promise was fulfilled in them: "And it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light."

Well, this year is to be so much more of the journey. Old age is to come, is rapidly coming, has already come to many. There is work yet to be done, and looking toward the new year the closing words of the old hymn come back to me:—

"Oh that each in the day
Of His coming might say,
'I have fought my way through,
I have finished the work Thou didst give me to do.'
Oh that each from his Lord
May receive the glad word,
'Well and faithfully done,
Enter into My joy, and sit down on My throne.'"

Another.

Jan. 29, 1891.

I REMEMBER a large clump of tall pine trees standing close together in the Southern land. They were stretching upward toward the sunlight. They seemed to be a protection to each other. But when men began to cut some of the outside trees, not a great many, a strange result followed. Every now and then we were startled by the crash of some tree falling by its own weight. Each seemed to have lost the sheltering help of the other, and when the breakage began it was clear that they had been trying to reach the heavenly air, and had little root in the earthly soil.

I wonder if it is so with men. Is it necessary to put everything upon the level of statistical averages in insurance tables? No. If my thought is a fancy, it is a kindly fancy. I see together various men who, a few years ago, were variously united. They had similar, and often common, interests — interests which rose above selfish considerations and made them grow up toward heaven. They were not firmly rooted in earthly soil.

The departure of Charles A. Richardson, in this line of departures, should have its passing notice. The current of affairs will flow on, the special interests which were in his charge will not fail, but some of us are getting to feel lonesome. We miss familiar faces. The silence of the unheard voices is painful. We are turning toward our children, and living our lives largely over again in them. If the sons can make as true men as some of these who have gone, we shall be happy. If the daughters be as true women as those depart-

ing, we shall be satisfied. We believe that, in God's ordering, it will be so. Worthy lives all help toward this end. If I were to point out to a young man an example of what can be effected by singleness of purpose, patient continuance in well doing, and methodical industry, through the course of a life beginning in somewhat adverse circumstances and closing in high success, both as to conditions and character, I would tell him without a moment's hesitation of our brother who has so suddenly fallen. One of the most helpful, early conditions, however, was beginning in his boyhood that Christian life from which he never swerved, and which, as he realized it, made him honorable and upright. Young men can see in him what a life of honest and well-directed industry under the government of principle can secure. He not only succeeded for himself, but, what was more to him, his steady service was an essential constituent in making a great, religious newspaper.

I well remember how, in 1861, he kindly pressed me into a half promise to write letters from army life for the *Congregationalist.* I regretted at once even the half promise, and delayed for a long time. To tell the truth, I did not believe that I could write a decent letter of that kind. At last, on his importunity, I wrote him that I would try to have one ready about a certain date. How terrified I was when next week I read in print that the readers might expect a letter from "Chaplain Quint" at the given time! Then there was no help for it. I have been in cordial relations with him ever since. This article is, alas, written in fulfilling a recent engagement made with him. He was providing, unknowingly, for these recollections of himself.

Others know, perhaps, as fully as myself what he was in his editorial life. No; I have at least the advantage of years, and look farther back upon his calm judgment, his cautious survey of any question on its every side, and his sagacity as to what was needed to promote the great Christian object of the paper. But he is now in my mind far more as the man than as the editor, in his inner life than in his official chair. He was a man who did not wear his emotional nature outside. There were glimpses of it every now and then. What did that row of past and present office boys at his funeral mean? They knew that the calm, sedate man had a heart. Others knew it also, and I knew (for he consulted me as to method) where some of his benefactions went to personal help. Perhaps, also, it was a glimpse of his tender faith when, after the death of one of his several children who died — a babe only of days — he printed in the paper the simple words, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years."

No one may think that he knows a man because he knows an editor. At least it would require a subtle instinct which few possess. Even then the fitting occasions to draw out certain features of character are wanting. One needs to be in a person's church and somewhat in social surroundings, and especially as a welcome guest in his house. I was for quite a number of months, by his arrangement, in charge of the prayer meeting and Sunday services of the church in which our friend was an officer. No one will be surprised at my saying that no more exact and punctual man ever lived. He was superintendent of the Sunday school, and the opening of the school was exact to a minute. He was always ready, but solely because he planned his work beforehand. If others were not as punctual, he did not fret but he

Another.

hinted. But I soon came to understand the immovable character of his faith and the riches of his Christian experience, and this in spite of his reticence. His sense of justice was instinctive and his conscientiousness seemed perfect. Repeatedly an inmate in his house, and passing Sundays there, together with the Saturday nights, of course, as I did, one could see, or rather feel, the tenderness and gentleness of his home life. There the real man was thoroughly understood. Those days were always Christian, but not gloomy. He was very kind to a guest, but he never did things in a way or with an air that said, "You see how kind I am." I do not think it beyond propriety for me to allude to the sweet deference and tender respect which he showed to his aged mother, then cared for and nurtured in his home with the most beautiful affection — a saint who, at the age of nearly ninety-six, is at the time of this writing trembling on the verge of eternal life. Nothing pleased our friend better than to have one inquire for his mother, and he was happy when the Christian guest, whom he thought it wise to invite to that service, would read a bit of Scripture and offer a few words of prayer in the aged mother's sunny room. He was telling me a few weeks ago, with great pleasure, of the Lord's Supper just then celebrated with his mother at her home.

My last words with him were on the first Sunday of this month. It was at the close of the funeral service of a Christian woman of advancing years, a member of the same church with himself, at which I was called to serve. He came to me, and showed far more emotion than usual, and it was with a happy smile that he took my hand in a warm grasp, and said, "Another saint gone home to heaven!" Then he spoke very pleasantly of some writing of mine about "growing old," which he had read that day, and spoke a few minutes about our years to come, and what we might make them. In the following hour I saw him at the communion service, but we did not speak with each other. It was his last communion service on earth, and now he will never grow old. God has some work for him and these other men in the unseen land.

Seen and Unseen.

I REMEMBER a young man of about eighteen years, the only son of his mother, who gave him to the service of his country. The canvas group into which he was thrown had some excellent men, but it had also some who were profane, not scrupulous as to purity, addicted to gaming, and scoffers at religion. He had to come in contact with these things, but, without pretence, he kept himself pure. One day I asked him how it happened that he did not yield to evil influences. Standing upright, as a soldier and a Christian ought to stand, he answered with soldierly directness, "I want to be able to look my mother in the face when I get home without feeling ashamed." I knew the stock from which he came, and it was one in which a sense of Christian honor, especially in reverence for a mother's love and goodness, would have remarkable strength. The power which held him was more than law, more even than principle; it was the sensitiveness which saw the unseen mother's pure eyes, and imagined how

he would feel when he must again look into her face. A mother's true control was here illustrated; nor was there any less visible the strength of those spiritual influences which are far more powerful than sight, and those laws of fitness which are stronger than commandments. I wonder if his feeling would have been changed if on the next day he had received a letter telling him that his mother had been transferred to the eternal home. Would he still have said, "I want to be able to look my mother in the face when I get home"? I think he would, and I think the influence of that silent attraction coming from the heavenly world would have been more to him than all the arguments ever framed.

I wonder still farther whether the great day of judgment necessarily means the unrolling of records, or whether it be sufficient that every one shall meet the look of his Lord. When the Master turned and looked upon Peter, the look was the voiceless judgment. Is it unsafe to think that penalty in that unseen eternity is not a measured amount of retribution for a given amount of sin, but the instinctive shrinking of the evil from the presence of infinite purity? Is it harmful to suppose that the accepted find their acceptance at once in the peace with which they look up into the face of the Lord? The spiritual sense of the Scriptures seems to warrant this conception. The personality of our Lord is so vividly foremost, that its constraining power overshadows the motives, however great, drawn from all other sources. No abstract considerations compare with the standard of the Master's approval. The new disciple "followed Jesus," and that was service. When they "went and told Jesus," that was consolation. When one "endured as seeing Him who is invisible," that was the secret of heroism. The undaunted apostle, "looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith," had no need of faith by collated proofs. "In whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing." He was the incarnate way, truth, life.

Then the most controlling motives are in personal influences rather than arguments. The influences are in the higher sphere, and not in the lower. They are in the unseen, and not in the seen. That is, this is the fact except in cases where brute force seems to be a necessary government; or, at best, where the nature is such that it must run in iron grooves. The sensitiveness which on the shore detects the spot where a flaw in the cable has occurred a thousand miles away is not a greater work of God than the sensitiveness of spiritual fitnesses and connections, like that of the mother in her Massachusetts home and her boy in the changing scenes of bivouac and battle.

"With me," said Paul, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." He was not independent. He acknowledged allegiance. He was willing to be judged. But the test by which he would stand was above his surroundings. The boy soldier was indifferent to any expressed opinion of those who could not understand him. Is this that which enables men to endure with calmness and gentleness sometimes the misconceptions of others, and even of Christian friends? Is it this which satisfies one to remain in silence because of the consciousness that the misconceptions are a "small thing" in comparison with the approval of one who understands the heart? Not pleasant indeed is it to be misunderstood, but that is nothing if there shall be no stain upon the purity of motive, no record of wavering in loyalty.

Seen and Unseen.

There are intermediate tests in life. One does not wait till he gets home. The influence is continuous. I recall another instance, somewhat different, but which illustrates the truth of which I am writing. A father and mother, Christian friends of mine, expressed to me their anxieties regarding the conduct of a son in a distant city from whom they must long be unavoidably separated. In the circumstances their fears were natural. I asked them how often he wrote home. "Once a fortnight to a day," was the answer. I asked if I might see some of his letters, and on their willing consent I read attentively quite a number of them. "You need have no fear," I told them. "A son who writes these full letters, and of such a tone, and so regularly, has not gone astray." I took pains a little later, through a friend of mine in that distant city, to make sure of the facts in the case, and my judgment was completely sustained. The young man had not in heart left his home. Years have gone, and both parents have passed away, but the son has, in Christian life, matured the promise which those letters breathed.

It may not be out of harmony with what I have said if I suggest a practical thought as to the unseen standard which all of us may well have in view. It came to me years ago in the incident of an hour. It was in the spring of an eventful year, and a river was to be forded, when the spring rains had raised the waters, broadened the stream, and made it a rushing torrent. The ford was diagonal and on either side of it was deep water. Twelve horses were put to each of the guns. It seemed easy to ford the river, but when, a little distance from the shore, one looked at the rushing, whirling waters, he was easily dazzled and bewildered. Horses drawing the heavy guns were misguided by the drivers and lost their footing. Some men were swept down the stream, although no lives were lost. I found my own horse swimming, but a touch of the bridle rein guided the strong animal back to the shore. Soon, an officer of rank, noting the confusion and seeing its cause, in a ringing voice gave the order, "Men, keep your eyes fixed on that tree on the other shore!" The order was obeyed, and the column passed through without further trouble.

If we look only to the restless affairs of life, we are bewildered. We need a permanent landmark to look to on the other shore. Beyond the flood is "the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God."

Unseen Channels.

YESTERDAY there came some mayflowers, delivered to us from the post-office. Although no letter accompanied them, doubtless the flowers were from New Hampshire soil. I suppose that the channel from that far-off point to this place of writing, although unseen by me, was some mail train. The fact that the channel was not visible to me, and that most of the journey was in the darkness of night when the world was asleep, does not disturb my faith as to the native source of the gift. My confidence rests partly upon a postmark, partly upon natural supposition as to the sender, and partly upon the character of the flowers; for I wish it distinctly understood that the mayflowers of New

Hampshire are superior to those of Massachusetts. They excel in coloring, in perfume, and in the long trailing of the vines under fallen leaves and sometimes under the snow. By the way, the only proper name is mayflower. Arbutus is an affectation, and epigæa reminds one of an apothecary's shop. Scientific names do not belong to sweet flowers. That mayflowers come in April is of no consequence except to carping critics. With these two or three thoughts established, I return to say that ignorance of the channel by which something comes does not disturb faith in a fact. And our flowers are facts, and we are sure we know where they came from. If beautiful things found here are heavenly, I am sure they came from heaven, whether I see the channel or not.

But the sharp reader will say that that railroad channel is human and well known. Well, then, let us think again. We found some mayflowers once on Massanutten Mountains in Virginia. In accordance with sudden orders, which said that a conflict was raging on the other side, we began at midnight to move up the long western slope, passing by rippling brooks coming down the mountain, and at sunrise stood upon the crest. The alarm had been a false one. The eastern side of the mountain, with its beautiful forests and the rich lowlands far beneath, lay in unbroken silence. A little down the slope we halted and the morning coffee was made. As an hour or two wore away men enjoyed the woods, and there they discovered quantities of mayflowers. They were the identical New Hampshire flowers. How did they come there? The mountain height gave the same climate as the New Hampshire lowlands, and so far these were harmonious conditions. But what northeast wind had caught up New Hampshire seeds and carried them to congenial soil in Virginian hills? Nobody knows; but of one thing we were sure, — we found our home flowers in the far-off land of conflict. Our men plucked them and wore them on the breast till they faded. If the blossoms from the trees which stand in Paradise are found here, I do not care how they came here. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," said our Lord.

Sometimes our inference as to channels is inevitable. There is a small inclosure of luxuriantly green grass beside one of the railroads in the great arid desert half way across the continent. In the centre of that inclosure there is, or was when I saw it, an artificial fountain throwing up a beautiful stream of water in that waterless land, and the scattered spray was all that was needed for the life of the grass seed. But whence comes the water? There is not a sign of its source. No rain falls there. But it comes from somewhere. In fact they will tell you that an underground pipe has been laid from natural reservoirs in some hills faintly visible on the north. This is reasonable. If there is a fountain sending up streams of pure water it can come only from a reservoir of pure water somewhere among the hills.

But again somebody says that that was human engineering, and the channel is not unknown. Well, then, I have in mind a wonderful spring very near the spot where our flowers grew which has given forth large streams of the purest water, nobody knows how long. It bubbles up beneath a low hillside. Push a rod down twenty feet and you simply disturb the quicksand. Unlike the fountain in the desert it has no artificial conduit. It is fair to suppose that a stream filters through the sand and gravel from a beautiful pond of pure

Unseen Channels.

water a mile and a half distant. The pond is a country pond, peaceful in its solitude, although a hundred and fifty years ago there was a bloody battle with the Indians on its banks; and I am sorry to say that a railway now skirts one side of the water. But the tracery of the hidden streams is beyond man's conjecture. People are glad to drink the water, and the cattle come to drink of the lower stream which is fed from the spring, and we know that the water comes from some reservoir — a reservoir higher than itself, and a reservoir which no summer or winter has ever known to fail.

How can we help inferring that everything visible has its origin, although we do not see the line of flowing? How can we help inferring that that which is seen shows the character of the origin?

Believing as these analogies indicate has kept me free from perplexities with which I have known some to be troubled. There is much good in the world and much good done in the world, and many good institutions whose spiritual origin is not apparent. There are organizations which lighten the burdens of care and trouble. Some people who do not like to call them evil do not see how to account for them in the absence of a professed and visible faith. I find no such difficulty. They are good. Being good they have a good origin. That origin is divine. The doers of these good things may not be conscious of the divine impulse, and some may be merely floating in a good drift, but I shall claim that all good things in society are the effect or overflow of Christian power and influence. I will not lose, for some technicality, the right to claim for our Lord's influence in the world every good word and every good work. This is a part of our divine privilege in its breadth and depth. We do not know how the divine Spirit wrought these things in places far distant from their home, but the flowers were facts upon the hills. It is to me the height of foolishness for us to try to reason out some method for showing that good things are bad because they did not come in some method which we have ourselves outlined, when we can insist that their glory belongs to God. All things pure, good, and true come from God.

I remember a religious book much used in the times of my boyhood which delineated in careful order the several steps involved in the coming of Christian life into the soul. I think there were five necessary, successive experiences. My impression then was, that, if either of these was not consciously present in due order, a Christian hope was fallacious. That kind of book has troubled many good people about others dear to them, if not for themselves. Yet they do not see these steps, and yet they see certain excellencies of living and trusting for which they cannot account. The relief is easy enough. These excellencies came from God. The springs which are sending forth pure waters are fed from the mountains of God. Never mind that you do not see the straight conduit made in five sections.

The Scripture says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." When such fruits exist it is clear that they come from the Spirit of God. They cannot come from that which is evil, for our Lord says, "Neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." To God be the glory of all that is good.

Movable.

I ALWAYS admired Abraham's desire for a city which hath foundations. He must have got tired of moving tabernacles. Tent life is very agreeable if the weather is fine and scenery good, and you move about enough for variety. But when rain comes, and cold sets in, it is not so pleasant, and the tent is likely to blow over in a hard storm. Ditching your tent will not suffice. Moreover, your quarters are much cramped, nor can you have a home. Homes demand permanence of place. I remember hearing a minister preach upon heaven. He wished to be philosophical, and so he declared that "Heaven is not a place, but a state." This sounds wonderful, but it is nonsense. The redeemed are somewhere, and Christ is somewhere, and somewhere is a place. "In my Father's home," said our Lord, "are many mansions; I go to prepare a *place* for you." That place is heaven. One of the charms in thinking of heaven is that it is permanent—a permanent home, permanent friends, permanent work.

I think there is a natural, although not universal, desire for permanence. Some persons seem fickle and always wanting to be moving about. They are good for settlers in new lands, and doubtless contribute to the growth of a country. Fortunately for the church there are restless preachers admirably adapted to the same sort of gospel work. But I think these are peculiar. On the other hand, I wonder how it must seem to the Englishmen who live on entailed estates on which have lived a succession of their ancestors. There must be something satisfying in it. Every part of the place has its fixed beauties, familiar from childhood to old age; everything is permanent and they know that it is. But this is exceptional.

For life is movable. This certainly seems to be the law of Providence. The law sometimes seems to be needlessly harsh. Why could we not be allowed to stay where we are contented? I wonder if many a minister has not felt how severe it is when some providence, possibly his own ill health, possibly something to be gained otherwise, removes him from the place he loves. Does he wonder why it is? Why should he be disturbed? Our predecessors, two hundred years ago, lived and died on their parsonage farms. It must have been a kind of paradise. They planted trees and ate the fruit. They saw the forest grow faster than they could cut out firewood. But our modern ministerial lives know nothing of old farms, old orchards, and old oaks. We are like that apostle who sojourned for a brief period in his own hired house. So, on the other hand, churches are grieved because the minister whom they love goes away from them. They see no reason for his being movable. Sometimes it is a great mistake, but on the whole it follows the law of variety which introduces new life. Permanent pastorates very often need a successor to develop the real good already done but not seen.

Where I am just now the young birds are being set adrift. The old birds had gathered up threads of dried grass, pieces of wool, feathers, and I know not what, and made beautiful nests. It seemed to be their love for the little birds to come. A robin redbreast last year built a nest in a woodbine near the house, but discovered that the lady could look into the nest from the window and see the eggs. Thereupon the old birds proceeded to make a kind of shield

Movable.

by fastening together the woodbine twigs and then interweaving the leaflets of the woodbine and ingeniously drawing it down and fastening it so as to make a perfect shelter in front of the nest, so that the eggs were no longer visible from the window. Such was the care of the birds. But by and by when the little birds begin to grow the parent birds seem to change their feeling. They begin by trying to coax the little ones to leave the nests. They fly up and talk to them, and then fly in front to show them how to use their wings. But when they do not succeed by coaxing they ruthlessly push them out of the nest and the little birds begin to try their wings. Birds cannot stay in their nests. The birds that so tenderly made a shelter to hide the eggs pushed the young ones out of the nest. Whether the birds come back in successive years to the same places is worth guessing — the redbreasts, the orioles, the little sparrows, the chickadees, the whip-poor-wills, the bobolinks which I hear, — whip-poor-wills late at night and redbreasts earliest in morning. One redbreast certainly did, who, tamed by gentleness one year, answered to the pet name next year. Perhaps the birds would like permanence, but the climate will not allow, and perhaps they must grow strong by flight.

I suppose that we do not know when moving is good for us. Perhaps we shall not know while we are living in tents. I remember in the summer of 1861 a long day's march, and a bivouac past ten o'clock at night. The men were extremely tired, but the air was cool and they lay down to profound slumber in the open air. In a little more than half an hour came orders to move at once. No reasons were given; no enemy was near. A march of perhaps a quarter of a mile up a moderate hill, and the men were ordered to bivouac again. They were extremely angry at being forced to move this short distance near midnight for somebody's whim. I think that most of those men never knew the reason of that order, and always grumbled when they thought of it. Commanders, divine or human, are not apt to give reasons with their orders. The fact was that by some mistake the men had at first been bivouacked in too low ground and near the malaria of the river. The second bivouac was on ground above the river fog. We could there look down upon the silvery mist below us. The order to the tired men to move was one of mercy. Doubtless we shall see, when the history of life is made up, that orders to move, which have seemed to us harsh in this life, will find their ready explanation. It takes faith to leave the matter thus, and yet faith ought to find this its easiest feature.

Besides, I suppose that most lives, if lives of faith, can find illustrations in themselves. Look back and see. Study the record and ascertain whether you do not discern some evil avoided, some strength acquired, or some opportunity opened, by the ordered change. Still it is not my way to seek many explanations for the providences of God.

Attachments which become second nature are sometimes exceedingly strong. In a New Hampshire town neighboring to me there is the peculiar story of an aged minister many years ago. He had long been the settled pastor under the old-time system, and lived in the ancient parsonage. He became very old and somewhat feeble. His grandson used to select an old sermon for him and waggishly shorten it by taking out a central part, which the old man did not

discover. At last it became indispensable that he should give up the pulpit, and by and by the old parsonage. The day came when he, his aged wife and his goods, were to be taken to the home of a daughter about a mile distant. His wife was taken in a carriage, but the old man said he would walk. He bade farewell to the old house and, with his cane, took the road, for which he had physical ability enough. But, half way in his walk, some men at their spring farm work saw him stagger and fall. They sprang to his assistance, but it was useless. The old man was dead. For him changes were over.

Honor Bound.

Some years ago quite a deal was made of an expression struck out by a divine who aimed at elevating politics — "the divine right of bolting." It was a "glittering generality" (to quote again), calculated to captivate the unthinking. There is a question of honor involved. That a man has a perfect right to refuse to bind himself to any party, or to the nominations of any party, is clearly true. But if, by his action, he has bound himself to its nominations, for him to bolt is not honorable. It is a violation of an understood pledge.

In a caucus, for instance, upon what basis does any participant in making nominations attend and take part? Simply upon the basis that the person who shall obtain the most votes is to receive the support, not merely of those who succeeded in nominating him, but of all who participated in the proceedings. For a person who did not succeed in his preferences for a candidate to "bolt" the nomination is a clear breach of faith. The man has tried to get a double advantage: first, to secure his own preference, and, secondly, if he fails, to defeat the successful man.

Of course, there are cases when "bolting" is justifiable. It is when the person nominated has secured the result by notoriously wrong means — as when a Republican candidate succeeds by importing Democratic voters into the caucus, or when the candidate is a notoriously bad and corrupt man — for the caucus assumes that decent nominations are to be made, and by as fair methods as a political party can be expected to use. But the discontented voter has no right to bolt merely because he does not like the candidate, nor because the candidate does not hold some notions outside of the party platform which the voter holds. For instance, a Prohibitionist has no right to go into a Republican caucus (if prohibition is not a part of that platform), take part in making nominations, and then bolt if a Prohibitionist is not selected. He went to the caucus on the regular platform.

There is caucus honor. If one does not wish to be bound by it he can stay away. There is no duty resting upon a citizen to attend a caucus. He can stand outside and judge of nominations independently. But there is caucus honor. A year or two ago an eminent jurist where I live, being nominated as delegate to the Constitutional Convention, had such a sense of honor that he refused to be a candidate because he would not vote for another person on the same ticket.

Politicians, with all their peculiar schemes and methods of success, always

Honor Bound.

observe some points of honor. I have more than once seen, in a legislature, an opponent to some particular measure move to lay that measure on the table, when it had come up, because he saw that the advocate of the measure was inadvertently absent, and the opponent would not take advantage of that absence. In the long run this was a wise course to take. Temporary advantage may be gained by sharp practice, but it reacts. But perhaps Christian people may sometimes need to observe in Christian deliberations and proceedings some of the simple things which wise politicians have found to be indispensable.

No legislative presiding officer, for instance, would ever dream of making up a committee entirely from his own party. Every committee must have a fair representation of the minority, not only in numbers, but in weight of ability; and the minority has a fair right to have its preferences at least considered. This may not inure to mere party power for the time, but it is essential to the wisest and best deliberations and legislation, as well as to ordinary fairness. Nor in a matter non-political would the presiding officer select for a committee men all upon one side. The same principles would hold and the same propriety govern. There is, indeed, a great advantage in having varying sentiments represented, to say nothing of the feeling of wrong in the minds of a minority when the rule is disregarded. A committee made unanimous by packing is not up to the level of even partisan politicians.

Nor is it wise to ignore different opinions in permanent official work. If the American Board, for example, had, when excited feeling prevailed, determined to make its Prudential Committee and secretaries a unit in certain matters of policy it would not only have done a great wrong to a portion of its own membership, and to a large portion of its constituents among the churches, but it would have done a most foolish thing as regards the wise transaction of missionary business. That a few earnest brethren desired to do this is, of course, well known, but the good sense of the great majority of the Board would not even look at such a proposition. There is great advantage in hearing the prominent views of large portions of a board represented at the committee's table. It is difficult to conceive of anything without two sides. Wisdom comes from discussion, and the wisest men in a majority do not possess all the wisdom or all the Christian devotion. The Board has escaped the peril, if it was large enough to be called a peril, and will doubtless continue in a course which is Christianly, as well as politically, wise. The same course should prevail in the election of new members to the Board. Unfortunately, the Board cannot scrutinize the list, if the committee, after its year of deliberation, reports the list only at the moment of election. It should report at least twenty-four hours earlier. One unfortunate precedent it is to be hoped will never be repeated. There should be scrupulous care taken, in making the nominations, not to rule out strong and devoted men who may happen to differ from a majority, and who, but for this difference, would naturally and inevitably be selected. Nor should there be any appearance of filling the vacancies mainly from one wing of the denomination. The great body of our churches is a moderate body. It does not go to any extremes. In the long run they will sustain what is fair and wise, sound in doctrine, and judicial and kind in policy. They do not demand compromises; they believe in moderate measures.

Nor would it be wise, in any of our bodies, to overlook certain principles of equity. If in our National Council the head of one theological seminary should be appointed chairman of a committee to report upon the condition of some other seminary, it would violate the fair principles even of caucus honor. I am happy to assert that in our National Councils there have never been any partisan selections of moderators, any packed committees. May this always continue. Fortunately, this is likely to be so, because our Council has no vested interests, and rests purely upon the mutual affection and fellowship of the churches. It would be the easiest thing in the world for it to lose its prestige by a skilfully planned selection of presiding officers, and by the appointment of a unanimous committee in some matter of great interest to the churches and about which there was a division of opinion. Success in that line would speedily make the Council a two-year-old bird's nest.

Neither our ecclesiastical nor benevolent organizations can flourish by political arts. But they must have political astuteness enough to know that their only hope of a permanent hold upon the churches is entire openness in methods, the absence of subtle plans for obtaining or preserving power, and generosity to brethren who may chance to be in a minority. The drift of public opinion is mightier than majorities in councils and boards, and compels obedience. Majorities and minorities are very changeable.

Anchored.

ONE day in my early boyhood, my father and myself coming out of church together, when I was just beginning to watch the sermon a little, I said, "Father, what did you think of that sermon?" The preacher had given us an argument to prove the existence of God. My father replied, "My boy, it is just as well to take some things for granted." I did not really understand him then, but I did afterwards. The argument suggested doubts. Nor was there any need of it, among people who never doubted the existence of God. Nor is there any sense, with very rare exceptions, in reopening a question once carefully examined and duly settled. Nobody can rightfully demand that we do so. Even if the demonstration we once accepted is not in our mind — as the demonstration of a geometrical assertion may not be — the result is to remain. We cannot waste time in reopening questions about settled facts. It is better even to have an imperfect path than to be floundering into a swamp.

Once in the Boston Ministers' Meeting, as it used to be — down in the Spring Lane Chapel of the Old South — where we used to report texts and outlines every Monday morning, a good brother from thirty miles back reported his exchange with the sailors' chaplain in Boston the day before, and was quite complacent over his effort. I learned afterwards that he did very well in describing a storm at sea, the great peril in which the vessel stood and the necessity of effort. He placed the vessel in the middle of the Atlantic. The sailors listened well until he said: "And then, with death staring you in the face, what would you do? You instantly let go the anchor!" Anchoring in three miles deep of water was too much for the nautical listeners. But it

Anchored.

would be as wise for some of us who have a firm hold on the great Bible truths to give them up and try to anchor in speculations and guesses. Fog banks are not even icebergs.

And we do not need to do it. With a living hope and a conscious trust we are well enough off as we are. Of course, if one wants to go into explanations, there is no objection. It is a free realm. But one who is anchored already to Bible truth is not *obliged* to begin over again. It is a good thing that some persons are bold enough and reckless enough to do this work, for there is doubtless an increase of knowledge as to divine truth in the end. But old-fashioned Christians are comfortable as they are. It is better, it is safer, to be anchored somewhere than to be adrift. The dangerous element of what its friends call "the New England theology" has always been its essentially rationalistic character. It is only the living faith of its adherents in something more than the system that has, so far as it has done it, limited this evil. Was it Lyman Beecher who said that when he ventured out on the sea of speculation he kept a line still fastened to the stump of some old Bible doctrine, and if the fog settled down he pulled away for the old stump?

Now, perhaps somebody will say that this is narrow and bigoted. Not so. Bigotry consists, not in firmly believing something, but in not allowing other people's right, under God, to decide their belief. A man who believes nothing may be the most bigoted man in the world, and he is when he is angry because other people believe something. Narrowness may be an excellent thing. Some of our boats in war time were up the Red River, and the water was not deep enough to enable them to come down over the fords. But the engineers built a dam from each bank which forced the waters into the narrow opening in the centre, and there was thus depth enough for the boats. The narrowness was salvation. As the same amount of water in a narrow stream is always better for navigation than it would be in a swamp, so with faith and work. Perhaps there is as much real progress in a narrow channel as in thin flowage.

I have heard some preaching lately. When I find a preacher who does n't begin by proving his text or his topic to be sustained by reason, I like him. I want him to believe his text, and to believe it so implicitly that he does not imagine it needs reasoning. I want to listen to one who knows that the Word of the Lord is its own proof, and what it says is necessarily reasonable. If the Bible got so low and poor that I could understand it all, I should know it could not be divine. Anchorage in truth means great faith.

But it does not mean fastening to human digests and teachings. These may be very unsafe. They are, indeed, better than nothing. There is a little catechism, price five cents, which I have carefully studied. It is a Roman Catholic one, put out at the meeting of their plenary council in 1884. Now even that document with all its additions to Bible truth, yet containing so good a digest of Bible truth, in its use by those children is worth rejoicing over. It anchors them somewhere and it does give them an atoning Saviour. It is, also, just as authoritative as any other human document. But there is the higher and better anchorage. It is to the Word of God, which is infallible. If one gets unsettled as to this authority, he can never be assured of peace and rest. Unless he holds that whatever our Lord Jesus said is truth, and supreme truth, he has

nothing permanent. If one does honestly and calmly rest in the divine Word, he may be narrow, he may not be an "advanced" thinker, but he is contented. He may not be a great thinker but he knows what he believes and does not worry. It assumes, of course, that his firm faith is not merely, or mainly, intellectual. It is the living, personal faith of one who rests in the love of God, and has learned by experience the goodness of his divine Redeemer. Intellect cannot anchor, faith can.

Perhaps, again, somebody thinks that this is fastening to something fixed like a pier. No; a vessel, in the true sense, may anchor to the magnetic needle. Not to something fossilized, but to something living. This is the essential idea. This is the true law of experience. This is the method of true progress. This is what is involved in adherence to the Word of God as realized in spiritual experience. Contented Christians find here the cause of their calmness. They have the unerring guide. The unseen is a part of it, "The hope set before us, which we have as an anchor to the soul." That hope takes hold on the unseen when Christ has gone. It holds one firmly to that divine reality yet to be seen. It is security itself.

There may be, let me add, a minor yet similar anchorage. One may be thousands of miles away from his home, from family, and yet the ties which hold his heart and life to that distant group and place are as strong as ever cable which held a vessel, and as true as ever needle which quivered only to point with unswerving truth. It may be home, it may be heaven; by and by the two roads will be identical.

"This Indenture Witn."

RICHARD, in "Bleak House," suddenly aud terribly prostrated by the collapse of the Chancery delusions, whose pursuit has exhausted his young strength, will begin the world over again. And he did, "And with one parting sob began the world. Not this world. O not this! The world that sets this right."

Something may be ended which is not complete. A marble column from which forty inches has been broken at the top ends there, but it is not complete.

The novelist saw human life and the necessity of some explanation of its mysteries which should be found in the completing conditions of another life. There must be something beyond which can justify the existence of things as they are here. If we believe that there is no future life, is it possible to believe in the existence of any creator and governor who has all the three qualities of intelligence, power, and goodness? One or the other would often seem to be wanting if the whole story is ended with the death of generations. Even now faith is often hard; with no future it would be impossible.

While thinking these thoughts I am sitting by the bedside of a dying man, my friend. He is in the prime of life, a man of the highest intensity, of the finest traits of character, of admirable business ability, and two hundred men are dependent upon him for a generous employment. Can he be spared? No. Why should his life go out, and his usefulness end twenty-five years too soon?

"*This Indenture Witn.*"

Yet we cannot hold him. He has a wife who is weeping and some young children. The wife has always leaned upon him and these active children need him. It is a happy family. Allow that seventy years ought to be the limit, why should his life be cut short by no fault of him or his while a multitude of useless or pernicious persons remain? His wife is holding his right hand but she cannot keep him. If this life is the end, is there any escape from the conclusion that the Supreme is deficient in one of the attributes just mentioned, and that this life is itself inconsistent with one or all? I cannot even tell these sad ones that all things are for the best for them if death is the horizon line of perpetual night. I could not make them believe it if I did tell them so.

Nor does the world show any mark of a completed and rounded plan in this life — that is, for the generations as they pass by. It certainly does not seem possible to reconcile with any principles of equity the often prosperity of evil and the often adversity of righteousness. It is easy to say what is true, that in the long run evil tends to pain and righteousness to peace; but the long run does not find space enough here for the complete adjustment. Asaph saw this, and how the wicked often prosper and the righteous often suffer, each through life, and he wrote out in the seventy-third Psalm, how near his faith in God's government came to failing, and how it was saved only by the revelation of what is beyond. The adjustment must needs be on the other side, for nothing here is complete.

It seems the same in the relations of wealth and poverty, even where no moral question enters and where no title has been earned by labor or lost by idleness. It seems impossible to reconcile the existence of the terrible contrasts with any underlying principle of equity in a supposed divine plan, if what is visible to us covers the whole story. Though it imply no individual wrongfulness, it still militates against the fairness of the system and the natural reward due to ability and faithfulness. Poverty and sickness are not blessings in themselves and certainly not in their results, if the death of the poor sick man is final. Our Lord certainly seems to have had in mind, in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the apparent injustice of conditions here, and He prolonged the story into the reversal. It will not suffice to say to the troubled that God has a right to do with man as He pleases, and that the terrible inequalities are simply because God prefers them. This would be too much like the horrible blasphemy in some creeds that God of His "mere pleasure" picks out those who are to be saved, thus amusing Himself with the process. People will not believe a God who is not a God of equity. But we cannot explain the immense inequalities of conditions here on any basis of equity if we limit things to this life. Not even could we make things consistent with equity though there were no ruler. Things here are not right.

Nor can one see how the existence of pain and suffering can be consistent with any plan of wisdom and goodness which ends here. The world is full of trouble. As a discipline one can perceive the reason, at least intellectually. But it is not discipline when the discipline destroys.

How incomplete also are the opportunities here for which the fitness is evident. Persons are limited to spheres of action which are often absurdly

inadequate. What is this for? They are fitted for enjoyments which they cannot attain here. A poor child looks longingly at flowers which her poverty forbids her to possess in this life. Shall she never have any beautiful flowers in any life? "She sees now," they said of the blind Muriel of "John Halifax" as she died. Was she never to see? A poor boy aspires to knowledge which he cannot have. Shall he never have it? My friend is fit, by his birth, his education, his experience, for much usefulness. Is this preparation for something merely a delusion, or is there an unwritten history of usefulness beyond into which he is to enter?

I began this writing with the "This Indenture Witn." What does it mean? Years ago I chanced upon a curious paper which was one part of an indenture of apprenticeship. A hundred and seventy years ago a boy who was brother of one of my ancestors was apprenticed to a weaver. The boy was to be taught the art and mystery of weaving at a time when the weaving of the rich cloth or of beautifully figured linen was a science, and the boy was to perform certain specified duties in return therefor. All the conditions on both sides were written out in a fair hand and on firm paper, but I have only a half of that paper. I never saw the other half which must have existed. They drew a sharp knife in zigzags and curves down through the centre from top to bottom. The apprentice had one part and the master the other. If any dispute arose as to terms, the two parts must be placed together and make a whole. It would have been impossible to manufacture a new half so as to fit the other either in shape or writing, or perhaps in texture. So it happened that the piece which I have has in its first line only what I have quoted. There the knife cut through a word. I have no doubt that the whole word was "witn*esseth*," nor have I any doubt that there was another piece which if fitted to mine would complete other broken words, finish other incoherent sentences and make a beautiful and intelligent whole. Because I have this unfinished half, I am sure there is somewhere its complement. The incompleteness of mine, with its evident intelligence, makes me believe it. This world is the separated half of our apprenticeship; the unseen part must fit it perfectly when we find it. God wrote the whole, and He holds that other part safely in His hands. So our Lord has told us.

Temporary.

I HAVE a pen, made of goose quill, which I have complete evidence was one of the number used by the Bible revision committee in the Jerusalem Chamber in one or more of their latest sessions. The ink is dried upon the nib. The pen did its temporary service and was laid aside with others like it. I wish the pen had done one more service. In 2 Cor. iv. 18, it should have made the meaning clear by writing the word "temporary" instead of the word "temporal." "Temporal" is commonly understood to mean things of "time," as opposed to those of eternity, making the distinction in most people's minds between this life and the life which is to come after death. Pertaining to this world or to this life is a dictionary definition of "temporal." The word in the epistle really means

Temporary.

"temporary." "For a season" is the rendering in connection with Moses; "dureth for a while," or its substance, is the reading in its only other two places, which are in the parable of the sower. Paul's sentence, therefore, means that of all things now existing, the visible things are temporary, while the invisible things are permanent. Both are co-existent. Eternity exists now just as much as it ever will, and time, so called, is but a measure of duration, and will also always exist. I do not for a moment admit that with God there is an eternal now. There must forever be time, if the creation stands, for it will forever take a certain measured period of duration for the planets to circle around the sun, if sun and planets shall continue; or, what is the same thing, if motion shall forever exist. To my mind, it is simple nonsense to say that God does not know last week from next week, or that in any literal sense He confounds one day and a thousand years, else He would not know as much as we do. A year is a strictly natural, and not an arbitrary, measure of duration. If planets should disappear, there will be some other method of marking events in their spiritual realm.

That visible things are temporary in the affairs of life is plainly apparent. "The old merchants seem to be dying off now," I heard said a day or two ago. But the old merchants are always dying off. They finish their work and pass away, and other merchants become the old merchants, and finish their work and pass away. All service is temporary. The old laborers serve their time and go upward out of sight.

Men who serve the church in any capacity have their term of office, long or short, and it comes to an end. I look back a few years only and Anderson was at the head of our Foreign Mission Board, and Badger in home missions, and Tarbox in the Education Society, and Langworthy in church building, and Means in the publication work, and Bullard in Sunday school affairs. Not only have these able men finished their work but in some cases their able successors, like Secretary Treat, have finished their work, also. The religious press has its equally noted names and the same history. A glance backward at the pulpits of any city is suggestive. It is not many years since the Congregational churches of old Boston, for instance, had Blagden of the old South, and Adams of the Union, and Stone of Park Street, and Kirk of Mt. Vernon, and Waterbury of Bowdoin Street, and Field of Salem Street, and Dexter of Pine Street, and Richards of the Central, and Smith of Shawmut. These were inspiring names, but although middle-aged men readily remember them all we look for them in vain in the present roll. Of even the buildings themselves, Park Street will, at the end of this year, be the only one remaining occupied on its old site. May its perfect spire long stand and its old faith continue.

The term of service is plainly temporary. I wonder if pastors of churches always understand this principle, or, for that matter, some parishioners. It is noticeable that most ministers have no hesitation in resigning a pastorate when an acceptable call draws toward another church, which really involves the principle now stated. But not a few feel it to be a great wrong that their churches should express the need of a change in the pastoral office. Why should not both recognize the plain, natural law that all service is temporary, and that the minister should never wish to retain a position where usefulness

and peace do not control? Place exists only for service. When the service in its highest sense is finished then the official term should also end. It is sometimes hard for one to think of breaking tender ties, but if others can do the work better, then others should be given the place. A certain amount and kind of work God may assign to some one man in some particular station. It is the man's province to do that work as the servant of God, and when it is ended be content. This principle extends to every department of usefulness. A church officer, a Sunday school superintendent, a teacher — each holds but a temporary position. We read of the claims which men have to some public office. They have no claims. The only question is, What available man can best do the required service? Whoever shall be selected, his term will be only temporary, and in religious affairs it will doubtless be limited by its usefulness.

This seems hard, but it is reasonable. I have sometimes thought that in many cases men seem to be like the pontoons of which bridges were made in war time. The boats were cabled in the river, side by side, the planks were hastily laid across, men and guns were quickly moved over, and the floating bridge was dismantled as rapidly as it had been constructed. Its temporary purpose had been answered. This recollection seems to cheapen humanity, but if the pontoons had been loyally conscious they would have rejoiced in a service which, though humble, would for the time annihilate a river. Pioneers used axes and shovels to make roads which would be abandoned in a week, but on the roads during that week moved great batteries and huge columns of armed men. Generals would lead the men, and subalterns would order sub-divisions, and formations would vary from day to day, and tent and bivouac interchange, and earthworks shelters be built and abandoned. Pontoons, pioneers, roads, camps, men, commanders — all temporary, but each had a necessary place in the great movement toward the consummation.

No, it is not a pleasant thought that the service of each of us is but temporary. We are not indispensable, and in due time others will take our places. But is the inference, therefore, that we can be careless? On the contrary, the fact that the time of service is limited will impel us to industry and faithfulness. Doubtless one should so work as if he had many years before him, but also as one who had but little time in which to do much work. The happy thought is that the temporary service is precisely what God appoints for its own specific time. It is an essential part of the plan. It is the bridge, the road, or the battle, just when each is needed. Each is necessarily temporary, because each leads to something beyond.

We must not forget to distinguish between visible service as temporary and invisible power which is eternal. The men whose names I have recalled once walked our streets and preached the Word where men saw and heard them. The men visible were temporary; the same men invisible were then eternal. The houses they preached in proved to be temporary; the real temple of God in those houses, then as now invisible, was then also eternal. Their preaching of the gospel in form and conception and statement, which men heard and saw, was temporary; the hidden gospel of a spiritual life was eternal. Their work was as necessary to the unseen living power as the material of the acorn is necessary to the vital force of the oak hidden within it, which no man ever saw, or the rude bulb which contains the beauty of the lilies.

Baseball and New Bonnets.

April, 1892.

It would not be wise for the Governor to cease issuing his proclamation of Fast Day. It is true that Fast Day in a spiritual sense is something with which a governor has no official connection or prerogative. He is not the head of the church. When in our early history the provincial government in itself supplied the lack of a General Assembly, dictated the organizing or suppression of churches, regulated doctrine, or ordered the convening of councils, the Governor was a kind of natural head. But it is not so now. And yet the day is necessary, for it is the opening date of the baseball campaign. It is like the announcement that a canal is open for navigation. It illustrates, however, the principle of our forefathers that set days and forms had degenerated, and would degenerate, into mere external show and would be productive of evil. They threw aside the natural Christian days, and proceeded to establish an annual artificial one whose set recurrence had not even the vitality of a periodical fitness. Their own Fast Day justifies their own theory.

But there is a naturalness in the recognition of Easter Day. Our Lord himself commemorated the annual Passover day which God had ordered should forever be observed in memory of a great deliverance. Then "Christ our Passover," Paul makes the substitute. Then came the resurrection from the dead, which was equally our deliverance, but now from the sepulchre. If one wants the fitness of an annual date he finds it in the Jewish law. That date is determined by the word of God and the unerring movement of planets.

It is fitting that such a day should be observed. Our Puritan predecessors had grave reasons for casting aside all the memorial days, but such severity of discipline could not properly last beyond the occasion of it. The inherent beauty of the day, with its spiritual inheritance from the history of God's ancient people, made a return inevitable. It is a Christian institution. It is a day of gladness. It is a day for flowers and music, with both subsidiary to, and promotive of, the great apostolic idea that the Lord's resurrection carries with it eternal life.

Perhaps we do not consider how prominent the apostles made the question whether there would be any future life and how the resurrection of Christ answered it. In fact, it was the predominant question. "Touching the resurrection of the dead," said Paul, in his plea before Felix, "I am called in question." In his still greater answer before Agrippa the keynote still is, "Why is it judged incredible with you if God doth raise the dead?" "How that the Christ must suffer," he continued to the king, "and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." Most wonderfully does this apostle develop this great theme in the greatest chapter which he wrote to the Corinthians: "Now if Christ is preached that He hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised; . . . and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished." Perished — if that were so, vain were

all dreams of a life beyond the grave. His words were the counterpart of that saying of Jesus Himself: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "Because I live," He said, "ye shall live also." We sing it in the words: —

> "If my immortal Saviour lives
> Then my immortal life is sure."

I greatly hesitate to turn from this sublime idea to the question how far this idea is maintained in connection with Easter. How far does Christian worship keep the great truth clearly before the mind, or how far does it obscure it by the accessories which are in themselves in harmony with it? I venture to suggest that on Saturday next alert newspapers in the cities will publish whole columns of the musical programmes to be followed in the churches of the next day — elaborate programmes of superb music, none of which is too elevated or too noble for the occasion, much of which will be lavish in artistic excellence. My question is whether some readers will examine them with a view to seeing where the finest concert is to be given free of charge, or for a small admittance fee, as they would examine contesting theatrical or operatic programmes. My further wonder is whether attendants may give the most thought to the power of Christ's resurrection or to star performers in the musical line. On the whole, however, good music can hurt nobody, and it may cultivate an æsthetic taste. But simple Christians and poor churches may comfort themselves with the fact that our Lord and His disciples sang only an hymn at the institution of the Lord's Supper in the upper chamber at the Passover.

Perhaps the Puritans would have felt still more obstinate if they had had before them some signs of to-day's not uncommon ideas of Easter. The public prints are always significant for public thought and taste. Advertisements, particularly, indicate the level of thought among different classes of patrons. So I will quote, to get one view of Easter. One says, "New Easter Gloves." A second says, "Easter Opening of Alexandre Kid and Suede Gloves in the Latest Spring Shades." A third makes an advance, "Special Easter Sale of Fine Kid Gloves, Handkerchiefs," and other articles of wear. A fourth gives us "Easter Opening of Cloaks, Tea Gowns, Laces, Dress Trimmings, Buttons and Neckwear." A fifth announces for Easter, "Jackets, Wraps, Mackintoshes and Outing Suits" — doubtless this is in view of the sad possibility that Easter Day may be rainy. A sixth and remarkable one announces, "Easter Sale of Human Hair Goods," with special sale this week of "Gray Goods." A seventh dealer for Easter says, "Come Early and Secure Some of the Greatest Bargains ever offered in Millinery. New and Elegant Designs in Mourning Goods." Nor are men forgotten. "Of course you are going to have a new spring suit or overcoat for Easter, perhaps both. Why not buy it this week? We have some special bargains that will be gone next week" — this notice being two weeks before Easter. One writer of last week shows a genius for description, with a poetic instinct worthy of all admiration: "A dream of fine gowns and Easter costumes of women of fashion. . . . Let me close my eyes and dream it all over again! Let me bring once more before my dazzled vision all those fair forms and exquisite colors and soft draperies! For it was such a pleasing dream that I would fain experience it all over again. It was day in

Baseball and New Bonnets.

my dream, a beautiful, bright, sunshiny day, with just the softest and gentlest of balmy breezes that played a little with the little leaves just peeping out of the trees. The grass, too, was bright and fresh, and the gleam of the river showed silvery through the trees. . . . And besides the fair landscape there was a group of beautiful women, clad in Easter robes. I could tell that it was Easter, somehow, although no one told me. And all the ground had a suggestion of freshness and springiness that is never so universally noticeable as on Easter Day." Then the writer describes the dresses; one will suffice: "A pale cream yellow foulard with a tiny figure printed all over. The skirt was plain with a very small train and a six-inch flounce at the bottom of the same material. The hat was all covered with creamy lace. The fine yellow parasol had a deep ruffle of lace to match her hat. The gloves were the same shade." This writer "could tell that it was Easter," the day of the Lord's resurrection from the tomb; he knew it by the hat "all covered with lace" and the "pale cream yellow foulard gown."

Paul said to the Colossians: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth." But Paul was peculiar, and fine yellow parasols, with lace to match the hat, and Easter gloves had not been attained to as the significant Easter costume by the women who told the hesitating men that they had seen the risen Lord.

But there are multitudes who will appreciate the significance of the Lord's resurrection. It is vividly understood by many of those whose experiences had made deep the shadows of the future. I recall being present, years ago, at a Sunday evening service at a camp meeting on the borders of a beautiful lake. It was in a large tent, somewhat dimly lighted, and we could hear the rain dropping steadily upon the canvas. Among those who spoke was a woman, retiring in manner, modest in demeanor, sober in tone and with downcast eyes. She spoke frankly of an experience not long before. Her only child, a little girl, had died. The mother had had no hope whatever of any future life. When the child died, the mother had frantically begged them not to take the coffin away. But they placed it in a tomb. Her heart was stone. In the springtime they were to bury the child in the earth. She begged them that she might see the dead form of her little one. They hesitated, for they feared for her reason, but consented. The little body was like marble, pure and white. She pleaded with them not to bury it. "Let me keep my little child," she had piteously besought them. It could not be. Time passed on in the dreary belief of eternal death. But the Lord had had pity upon her and revealed Himself as a living Saviour. Faith in Him brought faith in immortality. She was sad, but no longer hopeless. Christ was to her the resurrection and the life. The womanly story touched and comforted many hearts, to whom the sound of the dripping rain and the dim light could not obscure the glory of the resurrection.

Reasonable Accuracy.

A NEW BEDFORD friend used to tell of a well-to-do man whom he knew in Rhode Island, who had been noted for chicanery in business practices, but who, in his last days, said to the minister, "Parson, I've been thinking it over and I've about come to the conclusion that if I were to begin life over again I would be principally honest." I think it would be equally well to be principally correct in representation of things.

Not that it is necessary to confine ourselves to etymological meanings of words. It is stated that a Harvard professor, once being in New York City, and desiring to find the residence of a friend, was directed to the square where that friend lived; that he followed accurately all the turnings to the supposed square, but that he returned in a towering rage without looking for the number of the house because he said there was no square there — it was only a quadrilateral. I do not myself believe the story. A friend tells me that "the street which is called Straight" in Damascus is not quite straight, and my friend has been in Damascus and ought to know. But I have no doubt that Ananias found Paul, notwithstanding the etymological difficulty. It is not necessary to be absolutely precise.

Absolute precision may not be a guarantee of real truth. I used to hear the name of an old-time trader, who sold ardent spirits when that was regarded as an honorable business with other groceries, who regularly said to persons, if they complained that his liquor must have been watered, "Friend, I tell thee the simple truth; that rum is exactly as it came in that barrel from the distillery." He told the precise fact, but he had ordered it well watered before it left the distillery. It is sometimes easy by such literalism to satisfy a peculiar conscience.

Then, again, there are morbid consciences which worry greatly over painful attempts at literal accuracy in the sense which the mythical Harvard professor is supposed to have demanded. One of the most disagreeable persons whom I ever met was a schoolmaster, who, from conscientious principle, would never say, "I don't" nor "I won't," but always squared out, "I do not" and "I will not." His style of speaking was always marching in regular column when "route step" would have been much more effective. Without the slightest disparagement of truthfulness colloquial language may be used to advantage. We are always suspicious of the man who shot just ninety-eight birds at one discharge, and would not tell a lie for two more birds to make a hundred.

Some forms of exaggeration, indeed, have in them quite a respectable character, because they elevate a standard. When I was a boy every dressmaker who advertised called herself a "mantua-maker." The chances were that she had never made an article of that kind in her life, but the mythological "mantua" was the highest production of artistic skill and, therefore, gave the name to the business. So, also, in those days, a man whose highest skill went no higher than a few kitchen chairs and a kitchen table was a "cabinet maker," because a "cabinet" was the rich man's costly receptacle for his papers or for his wife's jewels and signified high genius in furniture work. A "watchmaker," who could no more make a delicate wheel than he could make a living butterfly, is entirely pardonable for suspending that sign above the window where he merely cleans and oils the little timepieces. These all show a laudable ambition for the higher walks of art, a fine determination to exalt and

Reasonable Accuracy.

not depress the standard of business. It is better, these things say, to declare a high standard rarely attained rather than voluntarily to avow a lower. The same idea was in an advertisement some years ago, headed in large type, "Rare Combination of Talent." The reader found that it referred to a new partnership formed between two barbers on Washington Street.

But there are some habitual statements against which I want to enter a protest. One is inserting the phrase, "you know," in sentences where it is a square falsehood. I am almost afraid that I shall not be believed when I say that in a bookstore, a few weeks ago, I had the curiosity to count the sentences which rapidly flowed from the lips of an educated man who was doing the talking, and in fifteen sentences thirteen contained "you know," and in eleven of these thirteen it was indisputably false. My friend the bookseller and myself enjoyed it when we came to discuss it.

But there is a more iniquitous falsehood frequently uttered without thought. It is, "not five minutes' walk." You wish to go to a railway station; "plenty of time, not five minutes' walk." It is a foolish untruth. A friend of mine wished to hire or buy a house. The agent said the house was within ten minutes' walk of a certain railway station. My friend, a brisk walker, found it to be just twenty-three minutes. Did that agent really intend to deceive? Whether he did or not he made nothing by the untruth. Last autumn I was in a party which was told that it was only ten minutes' walk to a certain steamer pier. I did not believe it and preferred, with two others, to ride. The steady walk of my other friends occupied just twenty-nine minutes. These things may seem trivial, but they might prove serious. A hasty attempt to reach a train upon such false representations might endanger life. I knew one instance where a person who had some heart trouble multiplied by four the time mentioned and then discovered that this quadrupled time would not have been sufficient for a person in sound health. A delayed train fortunately relieved him, but no thanks to those who gave him false information. I am afraid that I shall offend some partisans; but when I read some good political paper and find that the terms regularly and almost exclusively used in reference to the opposite political party are, "trickery," "deceit," "chicanery," "duplicity," "falsehoods," "treachery," and that these words are habitually taken to characterize honorable and high-minded men, I take it for granted that the readers understand the use of these terms as being only Pickwickian, and as harmless pleasantries in debate. There is a great deal in stating things comfortably. For instance, some time ago a newspaper had a despatch headed, "Redistricting the State. Straightening the Lines." Upon reading it one found that the innocent phrase, "Straightening the lines," meant a plan so to divide a great and very close State as to give the dominant party, accidentally in the majority, seventeen congressional districts out of twenty-one. "Straightening the lines" was a phrase of genius. It reminds one of the remark of Dummie Dunaker, in Bulwer's "Paul Clifford," when he discovered that the little boy whom he had petted in Mother Lobkins's drinking shop had become the greatest highway robber in England. "The great Captain Lovett," he faltered, "little Paul at the top of the profession!" "Straightening the lines" and "the top of the profession" sound well, are alike ingenious, and mean the same thing.

Commencements.

My father once perplexed me, when I was in college, by the sudden remark, "I don't see why they call it Commencement when students end their course." It did seem queer, but an old New England biography of the Cotton Mather type said that a certain person "commenced bachelor of arts" in a mentioned year, by which I received the idea that the graduate began at that time his life in that once distinguished character. Hence, perhaps, Commencement Day. The students who had thus far been engaged in preparatory studies were now to commence the active duties of life also, unless life was to be again measured, after due work and study, by commencement in the rank of master of arts. In fact, when I was in college the newly commissioned masters of arts were represented at the Commencement stage by one of their own august number, who came back to show his proficiency and dignity. It is now a practical question in colleges whether the masters' degree should be given as a matter of course three years after that of bachelor, which seems absurd, or should be reserved for those who prove their added acquirements upon examination.

These things mark transitions in life, and the transitions are definite. One who is obliged, by official duty, for twenty or more years to see the annual departure of a college class in its turn, and to put his name to the certificates, gets a feeling which, although congratulatory, is not without a tinge of something a little deeper than soberness. He looks back upon the past and he wonders what will be the future. I had a similar feeling, also, at Andover, a week ago, recalling the hour when a group of us had stood together for the last time, as a departing class was then doing. Pastoral life, great work in theological schools and colleges, noble service in our mission house and in its local positions, unremitting labors among the destitute in cities, skilful governing of asylums, Asiatic renown, and the graveyard — all these came to mind. "Permitted to preach the gospel five months" — if I quote it accurately — is on the gravestone of one of ours. The transition point marked epochs in life.

That is, a plain distinction, if found between a development of life which is practically only a growth by little other than infinitesimal changes and the sharp transitions which seem to make a distinct break and almost at times a new life. The break from college life or from preparatory professional study is almost severe. It ends the daily associations which have lasted for years and scatters young men beyond recall. It transforms the practical course of life by sending it into new channels. Its accompanying determinations fix destiny. It is only in a hidden sense that the growth which goes on is continuous. I may be allowed a personal reminiscence in saying that the breakings of three groups never fade from my memory. One, that of the college, the second that of the theological school, the third that of what was left of a regiment which for years had marched and bivouacked in the smoke together. To each there was a parting day. The grasp of hand with one of each is unlike any other grasp which the world can give. Each break was a mighty change.

A practical break in the events of life may be peculiar. I remember a day in

Commencements.

1861 when a soldier was buried. The day was beautiful and the burial took place in an ancient Maryland graveyard. The death was from sickness earlier than the terrible list which was to follow from battle, and all the forms of soldierly burial were observed. The proper detail of men, the flag, the low, solemn music by the wonderfully artistic drum corps, the full burial service, the volleys, were for that first funeral, and only for that first funeral, all in place. The moment the little column left the inclosure of the graveyard the wailing notes suddenly changed to that of the liveliest patriotic music, and quickstep was ordered. It was new to me and it gave me a shudder. Our colonel, who had accompanied us to the service and who was a graduate of West Point and had held rank in the Mexican War, said to me, "This seems strange to you, perhaps harsh." "It does," I replied. "Well, it is necessary," he said. "We have done all we can for the poor fellow and now we must attend to our work." We did have other work to do, and many a burial in trenches with but brief prayers. But the philosophy of my colonel's remark remained with me. Such apparent forgetfulness was not even then real. Memory remained as well in a comrade's breast as in a stricken home circle, but a new work commenced. New work is always commencing. Every pointed transition makes new commencements.

Many breaks come just now. A multitude of boys and girls end their school life in June. Many then begin self-support, and the commencement of business character in its permanent form occurs. It is, perhaps, to them the first abrupt change in life. I wonder if they realize how much depends upon a right commencement not only in the choice of work, or in an impelling impossibility of choice, but in the thoughtful determinations which are to form their lives. Probably not. It is June now, autumn is to follow. Perhaps they will take suggestions from those whose experience could help them. Try it.

I think that, on the whole, far stronger characters are formed in consequence of some sudden break in life, or at least of something sufficiently marked to be always remembered, than by a placid and uneventful growth. The latter is good but the former impresses. Did not somebody say that the nation is happy which has no annals? But the strongest nations are those which have had revolutions. The stone at Bethel made Jacob a new man. Samuel's anointing of the shepherd boy called in from tending the flocks made David thenceforth a king. The sudden flash on the Damascus road made Paul the apostle of God to the nations. The drift in late years has been to encourage timid Christians who did not find in their experience some date of marked transition from an old life to a new, and this is right. But it must not be forgotten that there can be no growth of that which does not exist, no development of spiritual life which has not been formed; and that many a person needs to be confronted with the absolute necessity of a total change, a complete reversal of the main purpose in life, an abrupt transformation such as made the great apostle say, "Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new."

Lopsided.

If his sons and daughters seemed too hilarious in manner and perhaps rather noisy, their father, a steady Park Street pillar, whose name I will not mention, used to say in gentle tones, "Observe the happy medium!" I have heard him quoted a great many times in the family circle. Some people object to the happy medium. They think that principle dwells only in some extreme.

When I was a boy and lived in a town, where, from our schoolroom window we could see the few coasters coming lazily up the river when the tide was in, we did extensive business in shaping small vessels out of blocks of wood according to good models. The river furnished schooners of the great size of one hundred and twenty-five tons, and one vessel was built there of the actual measurement of four hundred tons, bark-rigged, over whose subsequent loss in the Baltic Sea the boys almost cried. We had watched her construction from the first piece of the keel; we had been in the great throng which cheered at her launching. Would she be lopsided? was the anxious fear of the schoolboys as she glided into the water. No; the naval architect had been skilful, and she sat evenly afloat. Our imitation vessels were sometimes even eighteen inches long. We cast lead for the keels. We dug out the inside of the hull and put on a deck. We supplied the rigging, never venturing above that of a schooner, according to the instructions of the wisest skippers. But our great trouble was to prevent lopsidedness when we placed the craft in the water, securely held by a line. With graceful outside finish we had often to alter the inside and judiciously arrange and rearrange ballast.

I am inclined to think that that early experience has always given me an unfavorable opinion of lopsidedness in more important departments in life than that of our mimic architecture. By the way, I have just looked with trembling into Webster's great International Dictionary, but I rejoice to find that "lopsided" is a word of authorized standing. The fact which it signifies is certainly not unknown.

All of us are in danger of lopsidedness. A politician always is lopsided. He sees good only in one party and in one set of political views. That is why he is a politician. So may also a preacher be. It is hard for him to feel the balancing of truth in God's system. For instance, one can see nothing and preach nothing but the tenderness of God in such a way as tends to destroy all the sublimity of justice. Another habitually hurls at his hearers the law of God, like paving stones, and crushes a poor child of humanity with the conviction that God is a tyrant. The trouble with each of these honest preachers, each holding truth, is that he is lopsided. Perhaps one had it when the seminary launched him out into the world, but sometimes there is lack of ballast and sometimes there is too much spar for the hull and sometimes a movable cargo shifts badly. The fact is, in God's system there are always balancing truths. The divine and human in our Lord Jesus Christ are equally essential to religious faith and hope. Human ability to spiritual good and inability to spiritual good are equally facts. An independent, free will and God's sovereign purpose are alike necessary. An immutable justice and a free forgiveness, a fear of God which dominates life, and a perfect love which casts out

Lopsided.

fear — to omit either is to unbalance truth. It is not a question of consistency; centripetal and centrifugal forces are inconsistent, but the world therefore moves on. Some years ago I was to preach in a certain church. A friend said to me, "Do tell us about the law of God; it's a long while since we have had any intimation that there is such a thing."

On the whole, however, the fact that different men can respectively see only one side is not without advantages. They correct each other. If the shores which stayed up the bark I spoke of had all been on one side of the vessel, the vessel never could have been finished. They had to take opposite sides. Political parties and political platforms are healthfully one-sided, and fortunately balance each other, and out of their clashing comes good, but sensible men laugh at their claims to infallibility. Whichever party succeeds naturally becomes conservative and carries into effect things which it takes from the other side. If it does not it will surely be overturned. Generally, a party so frames its statements as to allow a great range of possibility in this direction. Great conflicts among Christian men who respectively espouse one-sided views are not going to destroy the gospel of God. Each side is usually correct in what it affirms; it is incorrect when it undertakes to deny. That is, it is lopsided. Neither side can rule the Church of God. A son of mine, when a mere boy, used to like to listen to jury trials, but one day he said to me, "Father, I don't think much of those lawyers; they seem to be one-sided; but I like the man in a bob-coat who sits up behind the counter; he always seems to be fair."

Some people admire a man who stands exactly perpendicular in the progress of affairs where strong influences come from some one side. Did it never occur to you that that man is undoubtedly lopsided? If my sailing vessel does not bend to the breeze which it uses to carry her forward, if, under the power of that breeze striking her at an angle, her masts are just vertical, then, if there were no breeze, she would show that she was badly lopsided. Cast iron perpendicularity is no sign of wisdom. Principles are immutable, but measures are changeable because principles are immutable. A general who should have felt it necessary, for conservative steadfastness, to keep up firing on Manassas Plain when the enemy had gone to Gettysburg would not have been considered bright.

Some people think that the moderate centre between two extremes in important affairs means compromise or policy. It means no such thing. It means that the people at either end, however much truth they may have, are not qualified to conduct those affairs to a successful issue. The thoughtful, judicious centre, extending in both directions as far as it assimilates, is always safe. While it uses both extremes it holds them in check and lets neither rule. It averages and embodies the sound common sense which alone can be trusted. A lopsided policy, when active, means disaster; when passive it is a dead encumbrance.

Delayed Development.

YEARS ago in my father's home I employed a laborer for a day or two in the spring to clear up a little bit of ground, remove weeds, relieve a few trees of any dead branches, and put things in order. He was neat and fairly capable, but in the course of his work I was dismayed by finding him just about to dig up and destroy a very fine and tall flowering shrub that I prized—I do not recall its name—which, on my hasty remonstrance, he insisted was dead. It is true that no leaves had come out, and to a superficial judgment the laborer seemed to be right. But the fact was that this particular shrub was, by its nature, behind all others in showing its spring life. It was not dead, it was merely late. It was much later than the roses, of which I had some excellent varieties. There is but one of these roses left, and that is the descendant of a wonderful white rose, which was my mother's favorite fifty years ago, and that particular rosebush is itself transplanted to a distance from the old home. The roses were beautiful, but my flowering shrub, which came out so late, was in its full glory long after the early roses had disappeared.

Some persons develop late. Some boys at school are far behind others of the same age, and their parents worry over it, while teachers are apt to get impatient. Now and then the newspaper writers reprint the accounts of remarkable things done by men in early life, which accounts are kept with other stock articles for reproduction. The names of young men who have undoubtedly done great things at an early age are well known. Sometimes the opposite side is presented, and we have given to us a list of great men who were dunces in boyhood. What either of these tell us is simply that no time of life has a monopoly of genius or success. But certainly there should be no discouragement in the fact of delayed development. It would have been a foolish thing to cut down my shrub, because it showed no signs of budding. Patience!

Some natures start upon what may be called a visible development later than others. The schools are full of such cases. From some cause, perhaps from unfavorable circumstances, the powers were not awakened. It was like seed in a cold soil. Perhaps some stimulus was needed, some motive power, sufficient to awaken the energies. Some boys have been waiting for a wise teacher to direct them. It is unfortunate that the system of sharply graded schools, with all its advantages, has the disadvantage of depressing individuality. In the old district schools, younger or slower pupils learned nearly as much by absorption from the recitations of the more advanced, as from their own direct study. The graded system naturally keeps back the slower minds, especially by failure to allow promotion, often to their positive injury. Such lack stimulus, lack encouragement. I am sure that pupils often do better by going on very imperfectly than they would by being kept back for continual re-study of the same monotonous work. Many a teacher thoroughly understands this subject, and adapts his work to the individual needs of pupils, into whose condition and ability he has an intuitive insight. The true teacher never despairs.

Delayed Development.

Then, again, some minds work more slowly than others, and the development at different stages is, of course, later. Here, again, is a defiance to any theory of uniformity. The machinery which would demand such uniformity is necessarily clumsy. Nor is slowness a cause for discouragement. Ii is not rapidity of growth, but its quality, which tells. Sunflowers grow up very rapidly, and the growth of white oaks in a year's time is hardly visible. But the white oaks last for centuries.

It is not true that college valedictorians are never heard of after graduating. But it is often true that in the course of years many a classmate develops into a greater manhood than the valedictorian. Perhaps the first scholar ripened too early, and in his brilliant exercise of powers, exhausted those powers, or attained his growth in his youth. It would not be a fair comparison to say that the early summer fruits are the specially short-lived ones as compared with those of autumn, but it is true that youthful brilliancy may not be the strongest prophecy of solid autumn harvests. Nor is it a fact that men destitute of early rapid development may not come to be the strongest men in a mature generation. There would be no difficulty in finding the names of men whose early development was slow, but whose ripened experience has given them positions of respect and power. On the other hand, I recall a shrewd remark made regarding a particular person before his life ended at a mature age: "Yes, he has been a very promising boy all his life."

There is sometimes another reason for delay in development. It is when the person has not found his fitting place. I know a boy — no, he is a young man — who is making a remarkable success in everything pertaining to electricity and electrical machinery. He never was a dull boy, but I am sure that he would have practically been a failure if the tastes of his boyhood had been thwarted. His mental development, aside from his mere technical knowledge, is as strong and clear as that of men in any pursuit. He might never have been an able lawyer, but his training in his own line has given him as vigorous, clear, and accurate a mind, and as good power of reasoning, as is secured by lawyers of a high grade. Sometimes, such development waits for just the right line in life. If there be real power, there is restlessness until the true place is found. That place, for the best development, means conscience, object in life, tastes, and mental characteristics. Given the right opportunity, and such a person goes on to success. If development is not witnessed, it is fair to ask whether there has been the natural opportunity, so far as work is concerned. In the case of a boy, it is fair to ask whether his natural drift has been observed; whether, if he is old enough, some object in life is clearly before him, in which he is to find stimulus for preparation; whether he is under the guidance of a teacher who comprehends his fitnesses and needs; whether he is the victim of some system of machinery as remorseless as that of a cotton mill.

The worst method of dealing with a slow boy is to get angry and call him hard names. Give him a chance. Deal gently with him. A slight recollection comes to me of a girl in a grammar school, who, I was told, could never pass the requisite examination for promotion. I was present on the day of a kind of exhibition examination. I had asked to have this girl quietly pointed out to me. Questions in arithmetic were thrown out to the class; up went the

hands of ready pupils, and the girl in question seemed to me rather bewildered. I concluded to try an experiment. I asked the teacher to give out another problem very slowly, to repeat it after a pause, and said that no hands were to be lifted until I called for them. I gave considerable time for the pupils to think, and saw a look of intelligence come over the girl's face. Calling then for the hands, the girl's right hand went up with the others, and I naturally asked her for the answers. Her work was correct. She had been suffering from impatient haste.

The most beautiful mayflowers in the world are those of New Hampshire. How I used to search for them in early boyhood before the snow had all gone! It is a notable fact that those mayflower plants bud in the autumn. The buds through all the winter are lying under mosses or leaves, and the snow mantle covers the whole. The buds seem to lie dormant during the whole winter. Their development might seem to be ended. But when the spring air comes to melt the snows, and the spring sun comes to warm the mosses and the leaves, the buds come out into beautiful flowers. The long delay was not lost. Perhaps the principle of this delay may parallel more than mental processes. There may be buds of spiritual life which nobody sees hidden under snows, and may be chilled for the time, which the sunshine is yet to bring out in beauty and fragrance.

Fixed Values.

My father and myself once made a visit of several days to his native town in the State of Maine. He was then just seventy years of age and had not been there for many years, and I was there for the first time. As we travelled about, incidents of his boyhood came back to him. At the sight of one fine farm-house, situated in the midst of broad and beautiful lands, he said, "There lived Mr. ——, who always insisted that corn was worth just a dollar a bushel," and he told me the story. In the early part of this century there was quite a famine year. The crop of corn, on which the people largely depended for food, was almost an utter failure, and potatoes were nearly as scarce. The people were near to suffering. But it happened that Mr. ——, from some reason in the character of his land, had a remarkably large crop. It also happened that he had refused to sell the corn of two preceding years, of which he had also large crops, because he could not obtain a dollar a bushel. "Corn," he had each year said, "is worth just a dollar a bushel and it always will be — no more, no less." In the famine year, when prices went up very high, neighbors came to him in some trepidation for corn. "What will you sell some corn for?" "A dollar a bushel," was the sturdy reply. "But," said one, "you know that corn sells for a good deal more than that." "I don't care," said the owner, "it is n't right; corn is worth just a dollar a bushel — always was and always will be." But he would sell only half a bushel to any one person at one time, and that only for family consumption. A trader came up from Portland, when corn was three dollars a bushel at that place, and asked him his price. "A dollar a bushel," was the reply. "I will take all you have," said

Fixed Values.

the trader, and when that was refused offered two dollars a bushel. "No," said the farmer, "it is n't worth but a dollar a bushel, but you can't have my corn at any rate; you want it to speculate on." The obstinate farmer sold his corn far and near, half a bushel at a time, for just a dollar a bushel, which he believed to be the only honest charge. My father added that a good many bushels were also given away to poor people.

I suppose that a profound financier, or even a superficial one, would laugh at the old farmer's theory, although no one could laugh at the farmer's integrity under temptation. Possibly there was Christian principle underneath, which refused to take advantage of the necessities of the unfortunate. He would have been justified in oppression of the poor by the rule which fixes wages, not by what they are worth to the employer but by the necessities of those who must submit or starve. I confess to a feeling that labor is worth what it contributes toward the common profits. If that farmer had made the scarcity and then sold at a high price thus made possible we should doubtless condemn him, but he would have acted in precise accordance with combinations of persons or legislation by lawmakers to cause artificial scarcities of any products so as to make higher prices. The old farmer was doubtless foolish in supposing that corn was worth just a dollar a bushel. But he was no more foolish than the man who pretends that a piece of gold containing a specified number of grains can possibly have a fixed value. The fact that the fluctuation in the production and use of the gold is comparatively small makes that article a convenient reference, but the article has no infallibility. It is, however, a very convenient article for speculation. It had that character when the government paid certain creditors in gold, and paid its suffering and bleeding soldiers in money worth one half the gold which it ought to have paid — a wrong which will never now be righted.

Are there any fixed values? In commodities, in moneys, in lands — plainly not. One cannot find anything capable of barter which has a permanently unchanging valuation. Its value — is it inherent? Or is it dependent on circumstances? I remember when half a dollar was offered for a single hard-bread. That hard-bread would result in exactly the same good to the hungry purchaser as it would had it cost only a single cent. The half-dollars were readily taken by some Middle States men, but some Michigan soldiers indignantly replied: "Do you suppose we are mean enough to take money for hard-bread when a man is hungry? Here, help yourselves." It was not good financiering, but I think that God has kept a reckoning of those pieces of hard-bread; and their true value, on the basis of loving your neighbor as yourself, is undoubtedly fixed in the eternal record.

Yes, there are fixed values in Christ's law, and in the measure of obedience thereto. These values are not dependent upon fluctuations of markets in material things, or on human schemes of thought on spiritual things. The absolute law never varies. The perfect love required never rises or falls. It adapts its outgoing to the needs, but itself is changeless.

So, also, is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ if it is real and is worth anything. Must I confess myself so old-fashioned as to say that the gospel of Jesus is absolutely changeless and absolutely incapable of progress in its

character and facts? Yes, I must. I believe that the old-fashioned gospel came perfect from its author and cannot be improved. It is not a human invention. If it were so it would be destitute of divine power, and a gospel without divine power in a world of wrong and pain were simply useless. It is not a development from something human, nor even from some divine seeds of thought. It is a revelation of divine facts to meet existing human facts, and the assurance of divine power to redeem and save lost men. There is no discussion of advance in machinery, or discoveries in lightning, which have the slightest bearing upon, or analogy to, the facts of human sin and divine redemption. These two are the unchanging factors which existed when the gospel was given as they exist now, and which exist now exactly as they existed then. The gospel is fresh to-day, just as it was revealed centuries ago, because human nature is the same to-day. The great facts of a fallen nature requiring regeneration by the Holy Spirit for its restoration, the basis in the atoning sacrifice, the necessity of repentance and faith, and the endless power of the Lord, who became incarnate, were declared or revealed when Christ was upon the earth. The old-fashioned gospel of this redemption was fixed in the beginning, and is the same to-day. It proves its efficacy now as it did in the old-fashioned power for men's salvation whenever and wherever it is taken as first given and applied by a living faith. The recorded words of the divine Lord are mighty with an inspiration which disdains human amendment.

Yes, the old-fashioned gospel has a fixed value. That value is precisely what it was when the divine Redeemer taught it and lived it and sealed it with His blood.

As He Did Aforetime.

I HAVE been told that a distinguished preacher advised his people in a New England city not to have fixed times for private prayer, but to pray only when they felt a special desire to do so. Doubtless he thought that praying at regularly appointed times might become a merely formal service. There is force in the objection. It is not confined to praying, but is the possibility in all regular and stated plans of service. True service is, of course, the creation of a willing heart. Songs of praise are real when the heart is in them and not otherwise. Yet there is the question whether momentary impulses are sufficient for the conduct of life. May there not be an energizing force of duty, which really carries the nature with it when emotions are not powerful?

Is it really a formal service, in the unpleasant sense, if the regularity of the service embodies the sense of duty and privilege? Daniel went into his chamber three times a day and prayed, with his windows opened toward Jerusalem. When the unthinking edict of the king made this a crime he still did "as he did aforetime." The exile longed for the unseen city of God, and perhaps he liked to fancy that the west wind bore to his opened window the air from her gardens. Would a regular hour of seclusion, by its regularity, hurt one who looked toward the heavenly Jerusalem and thought of her palaces and of the trees beside the river of God, and of Him who is the Lord thereof?

As He Did Aforetime.

I mind me of men, who, in years of camp and march and battle, used to have set times for writing home. By a camp fire at night, though wearied by march, they would keep the promised word. In turn the wife or mother or child at home wrote with equal regularity by mutual agreement. I do not think that this setting apart of days made affection formal or spiritless, or that messages sent upon the impulse of a moment, or dependent upon household convenience, would have had any more heart in them than those which followed the soldier from certain consecrated hours. They loved each other none the less in the intervals. In the field-hospital the times were not few when a helpless man would sadly say, "They are expecting a letter from me," and I would write it for him.

Regularity should not be mistaken as though identical with formality. Nor is it necessary that the first should produce the second. Form itself is not formality. A beautiful statue necessarily has form, but nevertheless it has ideal beauty. A perfect rose has form, but it is not formal. A message of love must have a form of words, but that it has form does not exclude the love. It is easy to confound these dissimilar things, but to do so is neither necessary nor useful. I think it will be found that the true discipline of life promotes and is promoted by regularity of conduct. Spasmodic effort, governed by whim or feeling, never makes good drill. Discipline in one sense makes formality, but it is the formality of an instinctively spontaneous life secured by the discipline.

It was a favorite remark of a distinguished New Hampshire citizen — congressman, governor, chief justice, and the peer of Webster in law — "I never ask whether a young man has genius, I ask only whether he has industry." Industry meant labor, perseverance, and regularity of habit. It meant order in work. It meant set times for certain kinds of work. From these things came the discipline which no fitfulness in method could attain. Is not the same principle to be found in religious life and religious work? Has God put man under two sets of laws of discipline and growth, the one for his religion and the other for his business? I am quite sure that the best workers, in carrying forward gospel work, have come to believe that the divine Spirit recognizes the same principles of activity in religious work as are properly found in successful secular affairs. Regularity and order are the divine arrangement. I think that observation will sustain the belief that the best Christian life is secured by systematic plan. Daniel certainly did not suffer spiritually by having set times of prayer. Has any Christian ever suffered by it? It may be said that an empty service may sometimes be the result. This may, indeed, happen, but if it be so the hour is not at fault, it is the man's bad spiritual condition. To abolish the hour would not better his condition, rather it would leave the man blindly ignorant of his condition. Perhaps a mistake arises from limiting prayer to a special request for certain things, which a man cannot rightly ask for if it does not feel their need. Even then it cannot be hurtful for him to consider what he needs, and if he is bold enough to feel that he needs nothing he certainly can thank God for such abounding wealth. But he does need something. He has weaknesses and perplexities and aspirations. He has confessions to make. He has thanks to give. But special requests do not make the

substance of what we call, in general prayer, such prayer as needs special times. The real prayer thus meant is but the name for spiritual meditation, communion with unseen power, and the opportunity for impression of heavenly things. Not that such subdivisions are in one's mind, but these realities exist in the simplest prayer. Why is it hurtful to take out of the constant pressure of the cares, which make up so much of life, little spaces of time set apart for peculiarly divine thoughts? May not these particular hours be needed, not only for spiritual growth, but to carry their influence into all those affairs which have been for the moment laid aside?

On the other hand, I think observation would show that many an apparently promising Christian life has lost its visible existence, many a hopeful experience been wrecked, and many a faith lost in unbelief by the very want of regular Christian habit in prayer and in the devotional reading of the Word of God. The impulses of an undisciplined heart are not a sufficient rule. A resolute purpose to give special times to these two great means of divine strength may seem to be arbitrary, but it is merely in accord with both divine and human methods. The hidden springs of life need constant replenishing. It was a wise provision, made imperative in the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, that each member should every day read something from the Holy Scriptures and offer prayer to God. It is the secret of the true power of that great organization and the security of its members, just so far as this pledge is made effective, not in hurried snatches of Scripture texts, nor in hasty sentences of formal supplication, but in reverent devotion and in faithful thought. It is the law of growth in grace.

I think I ought to suggest that the same principle is vitally important in reference to public worship and prayer meetings. Shall Christian people attend them when the whim siezes them, or shall it be from a steadfast purpose of regularity and conscientious duty? Is capricious impulse or transient emotion a method productive of good? I do not now speak of what help one may be to others; I speak of what will best promote one's own spiritual good and Christian stability. It is easy to lose a spiritual taste for the public worship or Christian conference by irregularity of attendance. It is easy to bring up children to enter into manhood and womanhood with no relish for a public worship which they have been practically taught was of no importance to them. Regularity of attendance makes strong lives — regularity from principle, fearless of becoming merely formal through appointed times set for the public worship of God. Pastors will tell you who are the ones on whom they rely for steady Christian work. They expect to find the earnest Christian doing as he did aforetime.

Happy is the church which is full of such men and women! Most tenderly and reverentially do I remember a pure-hearted Christian man of whom it was said, "He was always at church and always at the prayer meeting."

Experiences.

If there is any detestable expression ever used by good people the words "experimental religion" answer the description. They characterize religion as being a matter of experiment, or perhaps that some one kind of religion is an experiment, or that different kinds may be tried one after another: an uncertain exploration to see what will come of it, or a chemical combination to see what sort of a mixture will result. I suppose, however, that persons who use this ridiculous expression use it ignorantly, intending something altogether different from what the word implies. They probably mean the religion of experience. Experiment and experience have very different meanings. A Christian is not trying experiments; he is living a life. He cannot risk his course in life upon experiments; he must receive the spiritual revelation and spiritual forces which shall unerringly control him.

But experiences, of endless diversity, come to all persons. If written out they would be life-history. They are the impression of events. Theory may sometimes govern action, but experience tests theory. One trouble with many religious doctrines is that they are really external. They may be received by tradition, and the wayside is hard. They may be accepted upon ecclesiastical authority, and there is no depth of earth. They may be the result of logical processes, and these thorns choke them. Living experiences make truth real. Life, at any given point, is what experiences have made it. Not years, not Decembers, not watch-nights, measure epochs. A year of life at one time may be concentrated into a day of another time. The kind of experience, or rather what is experienced, is a decisive element, and the intensity of experience is another. A review of any section of time will show, if it be sufficiently intelligent, that that life has been simply what its experiences have determined and recorded.

If a Damascus sword blade, with the numberless veins of tracery in its steel, is the result of a million skilful blows as it rested upon the anvil, the condition of that blade when the maker surrenders it to the warrior is its history. Only the omniscient eye indeed can read back from the last blow through every preceding one to the original stroke, but the omniscient eye *can* read back through the result of each preceding touch of the hammer and see what changing effect every blow had had. What needs to be in the analysis of the great judgment day but the final condition which has in itself the record of the whole life? The omniscient could trace back through every experience the whole history. However faint the impression of "every idle word," yet the faint impression was real, as the breath which uttered it made a real, even if infinitestimal, change in the air itself. That is, everything has had its effect, and the life has been molded by everything which could have an effect.

It is easy to see this in great things, in hard blows, in sudden changes, but it is of necessity equally true in the finest and most delicate experiences in which the most sensitive susceptibilities are involved. If I see a full piece of printed cotton cloth and am skilful in the processes, I ought to be able to tell its history. If I am a chemist concerned in such work, I can tell from the colors then existing what successive materials have been employed and the order in which

they have been used, and how one may have partially neutralized another, or one have been combined with another or one added to "set" the whole. If I am a workman in the structure of such goods the cloth itself testifies to me the weaving and the processes of the yarn and the number of fibres in each thread and the kind of carding, back to the bale. These are all mechanical or chemical processes — somewhat visible, and the record is involved in the article upon the merchant's counter. But there are more subtle influences which are equally real but more difficult to trace. The influence of states of atmosphere at the time of weaving is one. The idea of the artist who made the designs, and the thousand thoughts of beauty flitting before his mind, which resulted in the idea, are others. These subtle influences are just as real as the mechanical, and their history is equally present. A boy can unravel the cloth; omniscience unravels the history.

But human experiences, which are the embodiment of events and which make character and which affect character so strongly, are often the result of influences almost unconsciously felt. The influences work whether the person stops to preceive it or not. The east wind affects health, or weakens or strengthens the constitution when the person affected does not think of it. I remember the "fever line," as the people called it, at Harper's Ferry, below which the fever was expected and above which they believed they were free from the taint. But one could not tell by any perception the difference in the air. The sunshine affects an unconscious child as it affects an unconscious flower, and so does spiritual sunshine affect the living soul.

Outward effects are easy to see. I remember an evening at Kittery Fore-side, years ago, where I was to spend the night in a house standing on the edge of the rocks where the sea rolled in. The occupant told me that there was to be a prayer meeting in a rear room which had a sloping roof, and invited me, a stranger, to be present. It was a rainy evening but the room was crowded, mainly with warm-hearted Christians. Next to me, upon our rude bench, sat a man in a shaggy coat with his face mostly hidden in his hands as he leaned forward. I had the casual thought, in my conceit, that he was probably a rough man of no importance. Remember that this was when I was young. By and by he stood up and spoke. What I saw first was a face in which I could read the effects of hard winds and drenching rains and beating sleet and driving snow, a strong face with a record of outward hardships. When he spoke I saw other things. He told in simple but earnest and manly words of his experiences upon the ocean, touching spiritual things: how God had been with him in lonely watches; how God had protected him in perils; what strength had been given him in times of fierce tempests, and what peace he had had when death seemed inevitable. He testified to the grace of God as seen in his own circumstances with a simple pathos which touched my own heart and made me wonder at my mistake. The record of storms was in the outward man, the record of holy experiences was in the inward man. There were two facts evident. One was, that what he had been made in his peculiarities was, by the grace of God, through his peculiar experiences. The other fact was, that such a man was thus qualified to help another in like circumstances as one of another life could not do. He had received power especially to touch the hearts of those in his own seafaring exposure as one without his experience

Experiences.

could not do. His experiences were like those which will make men who have risked their lives in battle listen to a comrade. Experiences give power, and peculiar experiences indicate the path of power.

Experiences, then, have wrought themselves into the present life which one considers specially at any given date. Much self-examination, and certainly much self-regret, may not be very healthful. They are liable to become morbid, but to a certain degree, to that which tends to a vigorous decision of improvement, it is good. Beyond that, however, is something outside of self. It is to understand, if possible, for what work in the world these experiences have been intended. It is to see whether they are to help those who are in need, or to guard any who are tempted, or to instruct any who are perplexed, or to comfort any who are in any trouble with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God, or to help to guide any in the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Not for self only have been experiences this year or any other year, but for all those to whom in simplicity of love they may be made to minister.

Hooks and Eyes versus Buttons.

An ancestor of mine was a minister in a New Hampshire country town a hundred years ago. As he owned a farm, and as he refused to receive any fixed salary, because salaries were then paid by direct taxation according to law, he was decidedly independent. In fact, he would have been independent under any circumstances. As a boy he was a sailor with his father, who was a successful shipmaster in the foreign trade. As a young man he was a soldier in the Revolution. As a minister he originated a denomination of godly Christians. He used to preach against pride, and quite often attack buttons. The prevailing custom had been to use large and strong hooks and eyes upon men's clothing. But buttons were coming in and, being more costly than hooks and eyes, were regarded as signs of vanity and pride. They were contrary to the simplicity of the gospel. One Sunday, when my ancestor had been again objecting to the pride of buttons, 'Squire Blank rose at the close of the sermon, as was not uncommon in those days, and courteously said, "May I say something?" "Certainly." "Well, elder, I think you are prouder of your hooks and eyes than I am of my buttons." The elder rested his face on his hand thoughtfully, and then said, "Brother, I don't know but you are right," and buttons were never again heard of in that pulpit.

We are not always conscious of the real motives which determine our actions. Indeed, it is very easy for us to be seriously mistaken in the matter. I think that the very word "motive" is itself often misapplied. "What is his motive?" is sometimes asked when "What is his object?" is meant. What one is aiming at is not a motive. The motive is at the beginning and not at the end. So also it is sometimes wrongly said that men act in view of motives. It is not so. We do not look at motives and thereupon decide what to do. Motives are internal and not external. They are what moves to, and decides the

character of, action. A while ago I found in an old note book the teaching that the will is always according to the strongest motive. I recalled the fact that it embodied merely a circuitous tautology if it meant the internal motive power, and it had no application if it meant external attractions thus miscalled motives. The whole matter was merely one of ingenious intellectual dexterity, part of a game of tossing and catching balls and cups. It is kindred to that transparently false assertion that the will is always according to the greatest apparent good. There is one comfort in present theological discussions, in that they have obliterated the evasive and delusive controversies about "the will" of forty years ago. One might as well feed on the east wind as on those wrangles.

The main point just here is that motive, being that which moves or causes decision, is within the person and not without. A human being is not a railway car waiting for a locomotive to draw him along. I find among my old notes, also, what would be equivalent to saying that this human car was not hitched to the locomotive by a Miller coupling, but led by some kind of magnetic attraction equally efficacious. This was a device to secure "the freedom of the will." But the fact is, the man has the motive power in himself. The character of his action is decided by the character of that within the man which causes the action. Outside attractions do not determine one's course of conduct. They can only appeal to some quality within the person, and reason and the grace of God are amply sufficient to defy the outward attractiveness presented to view. Any theory which makes these external things to be motives is a disparagement of human nature, and particularly dangerous. But it is plainly false. Two children look at some beautiful flowers. One of them is delighted. The form, the color, the fragrance, are alike charming. The other child looks for a moment with carelessness, and then turns away. What makes the difference? Not the flowers, for both children were looking at the same. The flowers had their power in the sense and love of beauty they found within the one child, and they had no power in the deadness of the other. The motive to action in the one who admired and who, therefore, plucked the beautiful flowers was in the inner love of loveliness. The spirit of the child and the spirit of the flowers flowed together.

Apart from such instinctive and voluntary expression of inward qualities what may be the real motives causing certain courses of action are not always clear to one's self. I have no doubt that my ancestor in the matter of buttons was influenced by various considerations, some of which he had not recognized until the 'squire's remark threw a flash of light upon them. He had begun with loyalty to simplicity and economy. But I think that his pride in humility had become concrete, and especially that his self-will was aroused because he could not conquer the buttons. He wanted to have his own way. He undoubtedly thought to do God's service by the war on buttons. Buttons were pride; buttons were vanity; buttons were extravagancies. He was a thorough conservative in the affair of buttons. Hooks and eyes had been good enough for the fathers. His great-grandfather had been a chief justice, and hooks and eyes had been good enough for the bench. The ancestor who commanded a regiment at Louisburg may have owed his success to the hooks and eyes of his military cloak. Franklin tells us in his autobiography how fortunate it is that

Hooks and Eyes versus Buttons.

we are rational beings, because it enables us to find excellent reasons for what we desire to do. We may easily fall into this method and imagine that we are governed by something far different from the reality.

There is something to reverence in the self-criticism of some of our old theologians, who declared that if their motives had been even unconsciously other than purely for the glory of God their great systems of theology would not help them. The systems might help others, but any infusion of vanity would vitiate their own standing before God. It was a lofty conception of spiritual life. The same feeling in common Christian experience, leading to continual self-inspection of motives, has made many a life painful. In fact, it is practically impossible to analyze perfectly the interior life. With the main purpose settled right, it is generally far better to live a life of obedience which shall trust to the Lord himself rather than to one's own resolves. But this implies that the generic motive power shall be right. This must be by the divine power within the soul. It is precisely what the Master meant when He said, "Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again." The right motive power is to be had purely by regeneration. It may be that this Scriptural law of Divine life needs to be recalled to consideration.

But when this main purpose is right, mistakes as to motives are still possible through human infirmity. Saul thought that his motive in persecuting Christians was a zeal for the glory of God. Instead of that it was a bigoted self-will. Persecutors, Romanists or Protestants, in past ages thought they kindled the fires for the glory of God. I suppose there was partly a real feeling that danger to men's souls through heresy must be extirpated for the good of men. But I suppose that there was also a pure self-will which asserted itself, was indignant at being challenged, and was irritated because it was not supreme. Human nature, even sanctified, is apt to consider itself infallible in its doctrinal assumptions and its rules of practice. It does not like even to tolerate when toleration itself is an absurd usurpation of power. The glory of God and self-will are very apt to be confounded.

Injustices.

In an institution of vowed sisters in another land, I remember seeing a legend above a door which, when translated, would read, "When one deserves hell one should not complain of anything." The door was one less secluded than others else I could not have seen it. It was one through which, doubtless, the inmates often passed, and the sentence must have been intended to make them the more contented with the privations and austerities of their lot in life. If it were framed to suppress murmurings and needless hardships, and upon the demands for what are called works of supererogation, still it had in it a real Christian element. The lives which are what they are by the mercy of God cannot claim exemption from hardship on any ground of good desert.

A studied remark which I heard from a theologian, years ago, that it would be just in God now to cast Paul down out of heaven into hell because of his

past sins, I had to reject. To cast Paul away when he was a grievous sinner would be one thing; to cast Paul away when he is penitent and holy is another thing. The latter would not be just to Paul in his regenerated life, nor just to Him who purchased Paul by His own blood, nor just to God's own nature. But Paul in his earthly labors could not complain of any hardships which the God who had forgiven him saw fit to impose upon him. He might reasonably have complained of men's injustice toward him and of undeserved ill treatment, for his persecutors had no grievances against him. But he was living under the mercy of God who had graciously overlooked his offences. Nor was his service, at its possible best, acceptable except in its grateful love through Jesus Christ. He could justly complain of what was human wrong done him; he could not justly complain of the burdens which God left him to carry, not even if those burdens sometimes consisted of the wrongs done to him.

Injustices are hard to bear. I well remember how in my boyhood I smarted under any unjust judgment or expression on the part of a teacher. I think that children often suffer from a sense of unjust treatment. They are misunderstood. They are blamed when they do not deserve it. It rankles in the child's mind. Often he has not skill enough to explain. It is a great gift in a teacher to have such power of insight as will perceive a child's motives. In fact, one without this gift cannot be a teacher of the higher quality. The sense of helplessness on the part of one unjustly treated adds immeasurably to the evil effect. Is not this sense of helplessness one of the most formidable elements in the poverty which whole classes feel is unjustly imposed by existing laws of social order? Resentment against injustice is natural and right. Helplessness under injustice badly aggravates the hurt.

But I am not considering questions of social order. If I did I should certainly not treat of them by smothering injustice under the doctrine of God's providences. On the contrary, I should say that God's righteousness itself demands discontent with every system of wrong and injustice. But my thoughts relate to personal discipline in the ordinary course of one's life. One may expect that he shall not always be treated with fairness. His motives may be misrepresented. His work may be depreciated. Even his rights may be denied. What shall he do? I remember a case which was reviewed by a council in which a member of a New England church was excommunicated because he would not abandon a right of way across a relative's land to a wood lot, which had been enjoyed by his father from time immemorial, and to abandon which would necessitate a long detour. By advice of his lawyer he persisted in using his undoubted right of way, and the church excommunicated him on the Scriptural ground that he would not "hear the church," which church was under the influence of his relative. Ought he to have abandoned his right? No; no Christian rule would require it.

But there will be many instances in which an injustice takes no such concrete form. One must not expect to be free from what may seem to him a lack of appreciation or of rightful understanding. He must do his work with this before him. This will often come from the natural inability of some person to imagine himself in another's place. This imagining is difficult, even if faithfully attempted, and it is seldom thoroughly attempted. Only persons in sympathetic relations with others can get just impressions and have rightful

Injustices.

appreciations. Intimate sympathetic relations are rare. Nor are circumstances always understood. I cannot but admire the calm patience with which men in some positions of trust go quietly and silently on with their work under more or less complaint, even if I may doubt the wisdom of their course in some particulars. To endure is a heroic element. To stand under fire without returning a shot, when such standing is in the line of duty, is the height of heroism.

Have you never admired the patience of a parent with a complaining child who is at the age when restraint is irksome? The child is petulant and says unkind things and the parent is grieved. But the parent says, "My child will know better by and by; he is unjust now and complains of me without reason and says sharp things, but he will learn better as he gets older," and the child does learn better, and if he remembers what he has said he is ashamed of it. Wisdom has borne with the unjust words of an irritated child. I wonder if God bears with our petulancies in a like spirit. Yes, I think He does. He knoweth our frame.

But I am thinking of the spirit with which one may bear what he feels to be unjust criticism of work or failure to secure complete appreciation, as suggested to me by observation in the case of more than one person. I want to distinguish between the appreciation expressed by men, which may often be faulty, and the real effect of work in the hearts and lives of those under its influence. Many a work has been wrought unseen of men, and wrought with inadequate appreciation, when such work has had in it great and indefinitely expanding results. Some great "revival" has not always had in it such mighty effect upon the world as the silent conversion of some single person, and the man who led the former has not made such impress upon the world as the man who influenced the latter. Nor is men's judgment to be compared with God's estimate. One who is faithful and conscientious in his service can endure the unjust criticism of that service which often attends Christian work. Time will bring all things right. Perhaps it is fair to say frankly that pastors of churches are not infrequently led to feel that their service has not been justly appreciated, that little mistakes have been magnified, that unfair opposition by Christians has impaired their works and that want of success has been attributed to them when it was simply the fault of others. Their hearts are saddened by a sense of injustice. Often they are right in their feeling. It is hard to bear. But what then? It would be a sad thing if one so dwelt upon the injustice experienced as to become morbid. He can think with humility of the inadequacy of his own best service. He can also remember that his Master when upon the earth was oppressed and afflicted. He can distinguish between the injustice received at the hands of men and the burden which the Lord has laid upon him, of which as a child of God he has no right to complain and which he can forgive as his Master forgave, and in bearing which he can patiently wait, in the meekness of love, until the Master shall set all things right in the world which is to come.

Differings.

When our class in Andover was just entering upon its second year, and thus upon the study of systematic theology, an old school friend in the Senior class said to me, "Beware of Professor Park's definitions; they will look innocent, but if you admit the definitions you will have to take his whole system." My friend was not absolutely correct but very nearly so. The brilliant professor's adherents have seldom differed from each other, even in minor details, and this uniformity is largely due to the fact that the system flows out of the definitions. It is as if half a dozen streams are struck which flow from one fountain through strata which do not affect the character of the water.

This illustration differs from a case which I once noticed in Tennessee. Three streams came out from under a low hill side by side within a space of a dozen feet, one stream being of pure water, one impregnated powerfully with sulphur, and one as strongly characterized by lime. Wealthy people made it a watering place. "They did n't else know how to git shet of their money," said a lank citizen of that vicinity. Perhaps there was a common head of water somewhere flowing through three separate channels and taking the characteristics of each on the way. Certainly, all three streams had one thing in common — each was water. I am quite sure also that if any visitor preferred lime to sulphur, or sulphur to lime, he had an undoubted right to his choice. I am equally sure, however, that neither person had a right to insist that lime was sulphur or sulphur was lime.

Just here I must say that I modestly differed from the great professor for whose intellect my profound reverence has never wavered. I think he used to say, in speaking of "terminology," that one has a right to use words in a peculiar sense if he but defines their meaning. But it seemed to me that one had no right to use a word in a sense liable to mislead under cover of a general definition. A man might say, "I wear a hat upon my feet, but by 'hat' I mean what other mortals call a pair of boots." That is, he has no right to take the word "hat" out of its ordinary meaning, for unless, indeed, he repeats the ridiculous definition every time he uses the word it will be forgotten, and if he repeats it he might as well have taken the proper term. I do not, of course, mean to exclude the technicalities of the sciences. Words in them have a world of their own. But the language used in ordinary affairs and in religious life should certainly be such as to avoid misunderstandings. For instance, the word "inability," as applied to a fallen nature, cannot by any series of explanations be forced out of its common meaning. If you prefix the word "moral" you cannot thereby change the character of the word "inability" or deprive it of its sadness. Yet great divergencies of thought used to follow different uses of this word. If men could agree upon the meanings of words differences would be greatly diminished.

A ridiculous incident is recorded of an Indian in New Hampshire when a few lingering specimens of that race remained in the province. He called at the farmhouse of a godly family and sat down in silence. The excellent Christian woman greeted him but waited till his taciturnity should give way. At last he began slowly saying, "Bible, God, wicked, good, heaven, hell," and so on.

Differings.

The perplexed woman said, "What *do* you mean?" The Indian replied rather angrily, "I mean cider." Here was perhaps the crudest form of failure to understand mutually the intent of words. But sometimes it seems as if enlightened people understood each other little better than the pious woman and the pious talking Indian. Their thoughts may be as incongruous. To get a mutual understanding they need to know what words mean. It would be too much to suggest that some words and phrases have come to need absolute redefinition.

A little time ago, in writing upon "experiences," which has brought me many kind Christian expressions, I ventured to suggest that the word "experimental," as applied to religion, was "detestable," as intimating that religion was a kind of chemical guesswork and experimenting in ignorance to see what might happen. I placed it in distinction from those actual experiences which the Word of God guarantees to the soul, of which there could be no doubt, and which enter into the deepest life. The difference between experiment and experience, as those words obviously mean on their face, I briefly put in contrast, but mainly I dwelt upon the real inner life of experience which God's Spirit makes a living thing. Somewhat to my sorrow a good brother writes a profound regret that I am denying the necessary fact of inward Christian experience by rejecting the word "experimental," that is, he uses the word in a secondary meaning which he holds to be sacred. I take the word, which I have hardly heard used for many years, in its obvious meaning, calculated to mislead an inquirer and being one of a set of cant words which do no credit to religion. He and I alike believe in Christian experiences, only I call this work of the Spirit "experience" while he calls it an "experiment." Would that all differings could be explained as easily.

Of course, there are things much deeper than words, or the meaning of words, about which men differ and which cause divisions. Such things may be somewhat removed from dissension by getting back to common ground. An English missionary told us at the Minister's Meeting one day, what I suppose all our missionaries would tell us, that the first thing for the missionary to do is to find some admitted ground on which both the heathen and the missionary could stand, as, for instance, that there is right and there is wrong. Unless some such ground can be found, argument seems to be useless. When it is found inferences and applications can follow. That there will be, among intelligent people, different views when the inferences begin is quite certain, for no man can see the whole of a great truth. Truth is a statue and not a canvas. Our Lord Himself is a person and not a parchment of precepts. Every believer sees the real Christ, but dare we say that each one sees the whole Christ?

There will be differences and the differences are sometimes vital. There are things so antagonistic that one of them is necessarily false and therefore dangerous. It is not wrong for one to hold with the tenacity of life to what he regards as essential and necessary truth. He can do it in a spirit of charity. It is mere sentimentalism to regard all beliefs as matters of indifference. But Christian men, in all matters which are merely measures and methods, Christians who agree in great principles, ought to be able, by frank interchange of

thought and the freest communication of facts, to arrive at mutual understandings of precisely what is and is not, and thereon having clear and distinct mutual knowledge, then decide whether to agree or disagree. But no division is right or Christian until all facts have been fully communicated, and each person concerned has been given the amplest opportunity to see precisely what the other sees. Nor can there be any satisfactory arguments or sound conclusions so long as facts are kept enveloped in a cloud of mystery under any pretext whatever. Our Christian work is not a contest between two parties in court, each hiding facts from the other so as to conquer. It is common property in a common cause.

Do You Know Him?

WHETHER you do or do not know some person may depend upon what you mean by it. You think and say that you know some particular man because you have seen him pass your door so many times on his way to his business. You know his name. You are on speaking terms with him. Perhaps you shake hands with him occasionally. If you were asked whether you know Mr. B. you could, therefore, readily say that you do. But you do not. You know simply a citizen in the street.

The same man is in his office, where he superintends machinery. Sometimes on the trestle-board he drafts wheels and shafting and boilers and tubes, and sometimes invents some new combination of iron and steel to multiply the wealth of the world. You have been in his workroom and have watched him. You say you know this man, but you do not; you know a master mechanic.

But at the close of his day's labor he goes to his home. At the gate two or three little children are waiting for him. He tosses the youngest up in the air and then the child clings to his neck. Two more, one on each side, hold his hands. His face is lighted up with a look entirely different from the emotionless and abstracted one which he had among the tools. You did not know, when you saw him two hours ago, what he was. He is a father now, and he goes into his house and shuts the door with his children.

Now you think you know the man. You do not yet. At the proper hour he and his gather together and read some psalm of the inspired king, or some sweet portion of gospel, or some prophecy of the heavenly city, and then, amid his kneeling group, his heart goes out in simple prayer and trust. Did you know him before that hour? Now you know the Christian man, and the knowledge is complete.

No, you do not know him yet, and you never will quite know him. He will, by and by, be alone and shut the door, and again kneel down and talk with his God, and express his thanks for God's goodness to him, and pour out the story of his wants, and bring his cares to his Father's eye, and confess his spiritual need, and find his divine Master. He is hungering and thirsting — this man whose table is well spread — and he is filled. He is weak in his human nature — this man cool and calm and powerful among the workmen and the machines — and he becomes strong. He is ignorant in his humility — this

man of skill in the powers and qualities of metals and steam and electric force — and there flows into his soul the divine light from above. Now, could you see this man in this hidden life there alone, you could finally say truthfully that you know this man. But you cannot see him there, for if you saw the kneeling form you could not see the inner soul, and you never will know him. You can approximate to knowledge in two ways. One way is by the perception of what overflows from that hidden life into the visible life of the man in all his relations to others, in all places and situations where you thought you knew him, whether in the street with other men, or in his work, or in his home. The other way is by the appreciation of the wants which he carried into his hour of human solitude and the communion with the Divine which he there found, an appreciation which is possible only in kindred experience. Hawthorne, in his weird philosophy of the taint of human nature, the most subtle and the saddest of all our writers, makes one who had been in the forest among the worshippers of the fallen archangel recognize by instinct the fact of some other one's visit into the darkness, being also unable to hide himself from like recognition by every other. Than this fearful theory, how much more glorious is the consciousness of spiritual companionship which knows by an equal instinct the worshipper at the altar of God!

But this presupposes the truth that one finds what he is seeking for in the way of knowledge. He will find spiritually what he is capable of seeking, and the result will correspond to his conception of that which is sought. One wants knowledge; knowledge of what? He may think he has obtained a correct conception of God. He knows what God is. But let us suppose that he finds God embodied in the awful and tremendous operations of physical law, in the cause and effect which control the earth and the seas, the planets and the orbits, the suns and the stars. What has he found? Simply God as a master mechanic. To him God is merely running machinery. He is great, but He is only a magnified specimen of the skilful man we found in his workshops. Such a God is not the true God. He lacks even what the master mechanic lacked of true manhood, if you had not seen him when the children met him. And the children are not climbing upon the heart of the great engineer; they are clinging to their father.

Some time ago I saw a workman come into the office of a surgeon with fingers mangled by being caught in the cogs of some wheels of a cotton mill. The fingers were bleeding and the bones were hurt. He wanted help. The forces of the machines were, of course, divine, but the skill of the surgeon was infinitely more divine. The force of the machinery was mighty, but blind; the skill of the surgeon was intelligent and remedial. It is not enough to know only a God who has made machinery in which the fingers of the careless are mangled and broken. It is vastly more true to all the spiritual instincts that a bleeding and suffering soul can come to a real God who is the Saviour of sinners. Nor does one know God until he knows a God who can pardon his sins, create in him a clean heart, give him spiritual food and drink, supply him with strength, make his path light before him, comfort him in sorrow, and give to him glimpses of paradise. He does not know God until he sees Him in His fulness. Nor can he know Him until he first sees himself as himself is, of a

fallen human nature which absolutely needs regeneration by the Holy Ghost, a soul helpless without the divine power and yearning for that grace which is in the fulness of God through the eternal Son, in whose blood at Calvary was the expiation of the penitent's sin. This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

According to Order.

DIFFERENT minds work differently. Some time ago two or three mild hints were given me that this *Congregationalist* was to be an Easter number. A hint was a novelty, and I accepted it. But it was of no use. I had some ideas concerning Easter — as every one has — but to write an article to order for a particular festival day was simply destructive of all life in it. I gave it up. Let the rich array of tender and spiritual thought furnished by others be sufficient. I confess that I cannot write mechanically, and writing according to order, even on subjects near to one's heart, would be to me mechanical.

There is much in spontaneity. I like spring water better than an artificial reservoir of surface drainage. I like spring flowers better than pressed herbs in an apothecary's shop. Method is doubtless necessary for success, but I enjoy much more the wild woods than the straight lines of young trees in a nursery. Often am I tempted to think that divine truth is more beautiful as it is shown in the wasteful luxuriance of the divine Word, and in the obedient lives of the inspired saints than when it is botanically analyzed and separated and distinctively labelled and catalogued. The latter, however, has its merits, and perhaps its necessary advantages. I wish we were always sure that the labels on the different parts of divine truth were infallibly correct.

As to writing, there are different methods. I used to envy a minister who did his work in a methodical manner. He selected his two texts on Monday morning. He folded his sermon paper Monday evening. Tuesday morning at nine o'clock he began his work, and labored a settled number of hours. Every day he repeated his assignment of time. Saturday noon the sermons were finished. They were good sermons, never falling below a certain standard of merit, and never rising notably above it. I used to think of a sober horse jogging along with an old-fashioned chaise, never hastening his speed and never lessening it. I tried the same method but with complete failure. That I did not succeed in it used to make me feel somehow guilty. I worried and fretted at my table day after day. At last I abandoned the attempt. It was not suited to me. I could do better to give the time to general reading, study, and thought. No longer disturbed, thoughts would come to me every day. The best thought for the purpose would assert its right. That thought, thus taking possession, would gather its own materials, and in the last hours of the week would put itself into form. But the key thought, after proper preparation of heart and mind, and with proper reading of the Scriptures, had to be practically spontaneous. I do not advise young brethren to adopt this method. In fact, it is never safe to advise at all. But if they are distressed by their inability to prepare sermons as men saw cord wood, and if they do not make

According to Order.

the free system a refuge for indolence, they can safely wait for the revealing to their minds of some truth which their own souls can feel. That is, they can live near enough to the fountain of life and truth to make sure of a spring of living water welling up to everlasting life. Work may be mere drudgery; it may have the joy of a spontaneous freedom.

Yet I remember a student in the seminary, not in my class, who prepared twelve fully written sermons during his Senior year. The rules required four, and I think that few of us accomplished more than two. How we envied that man! What facility in work! He had but to dip his pen in ink, and the words ran off its nib. I grieve to say that his stock of ideas was early exhausted, and he disappeared. Harder work, patient investigation, and less facility of expression might have been of great advantage to him. Which one of our American novelists is it who tells of the building of a dam to hold the waters of a small brook for grist mill purposes, whose wheel ran well for five or six hours after its completion, and then ceased because the water was used up?

Nor is it certain that spontaneity is always a blessing. Sometimes persons are always ready and will put forth their sentiments in a perfect torrent of words upon the slightest provocation. Saturated like a sponge they simply squeeze themselves. We expect to hear from them — the reiteration of stale assertions, the same self-complacency, the same recklessness of statement, the same gushing unction — in a turbid rush of consecrated partisanship. "There is a river," the Psalmist tells us, "the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." We can take our choice according to our tastes.

I am trying to explain why I cannot write to order. I would not do this but that there are doubtless many, younger in years, who find the same difficulty. I used to envy the Quakers in the "Old Brick" who preached only as they felt moved. Perhaps my own inability was the result of lack of training. I do not know. My trouble ceased when I boldly abandoned the mechanical system. The ability to measure off pieces of thought, as salesmen measure off yards of calico, is not given to every person. Yet this lack should not be confounded with one arising from want of discipline. I do not think it is true that the highest efforts of genius have been manifested on the spur of an unexpected moment unless there had been a mighty preparation at some earlier period. The sudden, lofty throw of a new artesian well could not take place but for some great, higher reservoir among the hills. Webster's reply to Hayne appeared to be unpremeditated and to be brought out by the terrible solemnity of the occasion. But it was the reproduction of carefully digested thought of an earlier day, now glowing with the splendor of his intense emotion. His oration was a spontaneous outburst, but it would have been impossible save for the accumulated riches which his great intellect had gathered.

The highest spontaneity, indeed, is the result of the most exact discipline. One could not but admire the instantaneous obedience of a soldier in the manual, but his discipline had made that obedience, in acts which did not seem to require reasoning, a second nature. A line of five hundred bayonets on dress parade would at the word of command come to a "charge" so suddenly that but a single flash of light covered the five hundred pieces of glittering

steel. The movement was spontaneous, but it was the result of wearying discipline. Perhaps Christian obedience may come naturally to be as ready, as instant, and as easy by loving practice under the Master's discipline.

I once had occasion to give some help to classes in homiletics. It was difficult to convince some of the students of the advantage of a carefully prepared outline of thought prior to writing a sermon. I believed that the object, the theme, and the main lines of thought should be known in advance. Unfortunately a great preacher and teacher appeared to have advised the method of letting the theme gradually develop itself in its own way during the progress of writing and come out where it would; and this authority and the success of the preacher who advocated it was triumphantly brought against my view. But I felt that I must insist on definiteness in the main purpose, on thoroughness in thinking, on order in arrangement, and on precision in statement. There was one reply which I could make and did make: "Brethren, it is not yet certain that any one of you is a Dr.——, and if you are you must wait till you have had his forty years of profound study and rich experience before you can safely parallel his method."

Still I cannot write pieces to order.

Anonymous.

THE word "anonymous" is one of those which have acquired an evil odor, but which may be rescued by removal into higher associations. This word often denotes a union of malice and cowardice in the shape of anonymous letters. Such letters are frequently designed to annoy as well as perplex. In such cases there is a meanness which ought to, but does not always, deprive them of their sting. The proper rule is, never read an anonymous letter. Dr. A. L. Stone in 1854 wrote (and the sentence is in print), "I *never read* anonymous letters." That and advice of another valued friend somewhat later led me long ago to the invariable rule of never reading a letter which has no signature. I look first for the name of the writer, and if that be wanting the paper is at once torn to fragments. I may thus have lost some kindly expressions, which I regret. I regret also losing any proper criticisms, but criticisms by a coward are worthless. Very few such letters, however, have come to me. I advise every young minister to adopt Dr. Stone's rule.

Writers for newspapers sometimes come into the anonymous class by giving a fictitious signature. It is often ludicrous to read what "I" thinks and asserts, as if it were of some importance when followed by a signature of "X. Y. Z." For myself, I have to be somewhat select in reading (or, rather, in being read *to*), and so I pass by these valueless articles. A writer who merely asks for some information may fairly omit a signature, but one who makes assertions and assaults and does not give his name is, of course, exposed to the natural suspicion that he is afraid to be responsible for the character of his statements. A year ago or more I broke my rule and made a brief reply to an anonymous writer in a religious paper, because I thought that a very grave misstatement, relating to denominational matters with which I was connected, might injure the general good. I may be pardoned for my weakness in view of the fact

Anonymous.

that the article in question had throughout a magisterial ponderousness indicative of official origin. I think I made a mistake. The reply, if any was needed, should merely have said that the statements of the article in question were utterly unreliable, as would be natural in the case of an anonymous article. Since then I have gone back to principle. I have heard, however, that the same pretended signature has appeared in various papers, although evidently used by more than one person. There are binary stars and why not triplets, or perhaps I should say ternary. The method is a convenient one for making reckless statements under an apparent claim of knowledge while hiding in a modest obscurity which avoids responsibilty. The recklessness is, therefore, one which does not require courage. Perhaps some such writer thinks that the mystery enveloping him will lead readers to suppose that he is a person whose opinion is worth something when he is aware that with his real name such an idea would at once collapse. It is a cheap method of deception, triplets.

And yet I think that the anonymous can be lifted out of such degrading associations. Some writers now unknown have not hidden their names, if they did hide them, from any discreditable reason. I have more than once dwelt in thought upon the providence which gave us, for example, beautiful hymns while concealing from us the authors till we shall see them in converse with Watts and the Wesleys and Doddridge and Cowper and Toplady, and a multitude more of divine singers. In such thought I forgot the kind of anonymous people to which I have alluded, and saw "Anonymous" in connection with Christian love and sweetness. Look at the first lines of some hymns whose authors even Charles S. Robinson could not find.

Take one of triumph: —

"O join ye the anthems of triumph that rise";

or that on omnipresence: —

"On mountains and in valleys,
Where'er we go is God";

or a cry for mercy: —

"O God, to us show mercy,
And bless us in Thy grace";

or one for Christmas: —

"Hail the night, all hail the morn,
When the Prince of Peace was born";

or of Christ's exaltation: —

"Christ the Lord is risen to-day,
Our triumphant holy day";

or of the atoning sacrifice: —

"I saw the cross of Jesus
When burdened with my sin";

or of submission: —

"Be merciful to me, O God,
Be merciful to me";

or of aspiration: —

"Perfect in love! Lord, can it be
Amid this state of doubt and sin?"

or of glorious hope: —

"For me to live is Christ,
To die is endless gain";

or of pilgrimage: —

"Travelling to the better land
O'er the desert's scorching sand";

or a song in the night: —

"My life flows on in endless song
Above earth's lamentation";

or prayer for guidance: —

"Shepherd! with Thy tenderest love,
Guide me to Thy fold above";

or of lofty hope for the church: —

"Daughter of Zion! awake from thy sadness";

or of longing to see Jesus: —

"We would see Jesus — for the shadows lengthen";

or one of the judgment: —

"See the eternal Judge descending,
View Him seated on His throne!"

or one of anticipation: —

"When my last hour is close at hand,
My last sad journey taken";

or the glowing hymn: —

"Jerusalem, my happy home!
Name ever dear to me!"

There are many hymns in this class. I have selected but a few, and have omitted quite a number of my first selection. All those which have earned a place in our books of praise are worthy of study. So also are some brief poems not fitted for song. These hymns are imbued with divine inspiration. They bring us into closer communion with heavenly things. They are instinct with divine life. It is strange that the names of the writers have not been preserved. Perhaps a writer had no thought that there was anything in his words worthy of preservation. Perhaps some writer did not wish to exhibit inner and sacred experiences in a way to be identified. Perhaps the accidents of life separated the name from the work until a reuniting was impossible. But Christian faith recognizes their spiritual reality and character, and knows that there are some nameless writers worthy of reverence.

What a difference between the two anonymous classes!

Remembered.

One of the touching features of Memorial Day is the sad respect paid to graves whose occupants are unknown. I was lately told by a former regimental comrade that the bodies of our own dead near Cedar Mountain had been removed to a national cemetery and reburied without knowledge of their names. This information chilled me. I remember how I saw the dead lying on that field among the wounded, who were waiting for succor, which was slow in coming. I remember the

Remembered.

trenches that were dug and how carefully all the bodies were identified, and how I made a record of the order in which they were laid. We reverently covered the dead with green boughs thickly strewn before the earth was placed upon them. We had words of brief prayer, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. I had charge of the burial and marked the trees near by and had rough stones placed at the corners of the broad graves, and I furnished the authorities in due time with a list of the men and the order in which they were placed. But the marks have been obliterated and the lists were lost, and all that we can now do in their honor is to put upon a memorial stone which we shall erect the number of the dead and the name of our regiment. We cannot tell the spot of their burial. They are intermingled with others alike unknown. Thousands of such graves are designated by this word "Unknown," and of thousands of others there is not even the visible vestige of a grave. Of those in either of these classes no child can come to honor a father's memory, no patriot can tell even the name of the soldier who gave his life for his country.

Was the life useless, and has its memorial perished, because identification of burial place is impossible? Would the life be lost even if the roll of names in the war office were to be destroyed? No. We watch over the graves of our dead in our own home graveyards. One of the recent kindly thoughts put into concrete form is to provide for municipal reception of permanent funds whose income shall be forever used in keeping in fitting order some grave for which it is provided. One may thus be sure that in years long after he himself has gone to rest the graves of those dear to him shall not be overgrown with matted grass or be hidden by tangled bushes or exposed to accident. I recall my father's seventieth birthday anniversary. We had gone together (myself for the first visit) to his birthplace in a Maine farming town. He took me to a secluded burial ground, in a deserted farm, where his parents and two grandparents and other kindred were buried, and I learned then that he had employed persons to build the neat stone wall around the grounds, and to properly place an iron gate of good design, and to put in perfect order the white stones he had furnished. He had now come to see how the work had been done, although I had not known his errand or what he had been doing until that moment. But I found that his widowed mother's sainted memory had been a nobler testimonial to a sweet and useful life than the marble stones, and I knew its power would live when even these monuments should crumble to dust.

It seems hard that not even the name can be affixed to a soldier's resting place, or the spot be known where some enrolled soldier sleeps. He deserved a better fortune. But I think that this leads us to reflect that the true memorial is preserved in what one has done. I do not limit this to achievements in battle scenes. The life which has projected itself beyond itself into other lives for good to those other lives, or has projected itself into some great cause, still exists. Its work is its true remembrance. When the name of one who is gone is recalled, what that one had accomplished is all that can worthily summon back the person. When Mary broke the alabaster box and the costly perfume fell upon the head of Jesus — no one knows where she was buried — Jesus said, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Nor is it necessary that that service should have been long. There were soldiers who had scarcely entered upon their military life. Their works seemed slight. And yet their life force had been thrown into the great consolidated power which moved on to final triumph. That brief life had become a part of national life. Much more, of course, did this life enter into the great achievement when more time was given and more work was done — more miles of marching, more nights of picket, more exposure, and more suffering. "Mind, I do not flinch a hair," said my dying friend to me at Antietam; he was a gallant young soldier, a brilliant man in his profession. Was his life thrown away? No. It was an inspiration and a living power, a heritage to other brave men.

In this immediate connection it will be seen that one should be contented with what he has been able to accomplish in the way of usefulness, rather than measure his life by the praise of others, or even by a high estimate justly his. It requires some self-abnegation, but the consciousness of having done something when duty called or privilege offered is sufficient. What matters it whether others give us due credit? I remember a sentence in a letter written me by that gallant soldier, Oliver O. Howard, when the well-authenticated fact that he selected Cemetery Hill was denied: "One thing is certain, the rebellion was put down, and we helped do it." It is a poor vanity, unworthy of a great cause, which demands even the praise that belongs to us. What matters it in Christian work whether one has or has not the credit to which he might reasonably think he was entitled? Is the work done, and have I been a sharer in it? If so, it is enough. Wait until the Master shall assign each to his proper place in the upper world.

How much force one may have thrown into others' lives he cannot always know. Sometimes he learns of it. I recall a letter which was once received by a minister from a person in a great Western city. The writer told of his residence at the East of one or two years, and of impressions received under this minister's preaching which he had concealed. He told of his removal to the West, and how almost immediately he had made public confession of Christ. He had been in the church seventeen years, was still a Sunday school teacher and a helper in mission work. He now wrote to tell the minister, as he had often thought he ought to do, that his own conversion was due to the one whom he now addressed. It brought great comfort to the minister. But the fact would have been the same although that letter had never been received. The minister's life had been thrown into that man's life.

The old Hopkinsian theology is said to have taught that one must be willing to be lost if it were needed for the glory of God. The idea was sublime; the concrete was grotesque. One could not be willing, and be a Christian, to be lost. To be lost means to remain a sinner against God and rebellious forever. But the thought itself intended a magnificent abnegation. It meant the sacrifice of self. It meant loss of all things to minister to the greatness of God. Similar, but so different, is Nirvána of Buddhism. There the end of discipline to the good is the absorption of the soul into deity and the soul's eternal unconsciousness. Terribly painful is even the most shadowy thought of such a theory to us, although to its devotees it seems the highest good, and this conception, like the other, contemplates divine fulness. Each contemplates a record, but each is a theory of awful sadness.

Remembered.

Yet memorials may be lost and the reality of true life be preserved in nobler memorials. The reality is in what is accomplished for others and embodied in the lives of others. Let us quote from Bonar: —

> "Needs there the praise of the love-written record,
> The name and the epitaph graved on the stone?
> The things we have lived for, let them be our story,
> We ourselves but remembered by what we have done.
>
> "So let my living be, so be my dying;
> So let my name lie, unblazoned, unknown;
> Unpraised and unmissed I shall still be remembered,
> Yes, but remembered by what I have done."

The memorial of the unknown soldiers is not lost. It is in forty-four silver stars upon an azure field.

Obligation to One's College.

I REGRET that my topic applies directly to but a small class of readers, and yet indirectly it concerns a multitude. The college is vitally connected with the best interests of society. This is seen, for instance, in the fact that our ministers are almost entirely college bred. The discipline of four years in liberal studies under men of great power and thorough culture, and in associated methods where young minds act one upon another, has a vast effect. Numberless teachers in our schools are men similarly educated, and the other professions are filled, especially in the highest ranks, with persons thus trained. So the matter of collegiate education comes much closer to the practical life of society than many imagine.

But I am limiting myself to a single thought. It is that of the obligation of a graduate to his college. One of the pleasantest days in life is the one when former students meet again at the old college at the anniversary. The old scenes come back to them. The old ties are refreshed. The college is again a living thing, with a genius of its own, a personal reality. It is not a collection of buildings. It is not a group of teachers. It is not a great library. It is a person. It is something to be venerated, something to be loved. That four-years life has had a marvellous power in shaping all subsequent life, and it seems to have been controlled and guided by some force emanating from a real guardian.

Is there something due to the college? I remember a graduate of my own time who, when asked to subscribe a moderate amount for something of benefit to the college, answered, "No. I paid all my term bills in full, and have all the receipts. I paid for what I got." He was putting the whole matter upon a mercantile basis. But even upon this basis his arithmetic was sadly erroneous. At that college the amount he paid for tuition was less than one half of what his instruction actually cost in money, and the remainder was paid from the income of invested funds given by generous people from time to

time. He was to that extent a charity student. Nor does this take into account the use of real estate, libraries, and apparatus, all of which had been contributed and upon which it would be strictly just to charge interest and assign it to the amount due from the student. Reckoning upon this basis, the person I have mentioned had not paid one third of the cost of his instruction. I do not know whether the Massachusetts distinction between charitable and benevolent would apply in such cases, but I believe that in New Hampshire this does not matter. I have inquired of various colleges and find the fact to be universal that no student pays the cost of his teaching. I think that the older colleges get the least proportionate return, but no college in our land could meet its expenses from the payments of the pupils. There is no room for pride on the part of any student over the fact that he paid all that was charged to him, while the entire tuition of another was remitted. It is only a question of degree. If I remember correctly, our great generals when boys at West Point were annually given seven pairs of white trousers apiece by the Government of the United States, with divers other articles equally necessary. They were all charity students and so are all our graduates.

There is certainly, therefore, upon the lowest basis, a debt of gratitude due to one's college. But there is a much broader and deeper principle. The influences of the college have made the man. I have, indeed, heard that some men have contemptuously said that the college did them no good. Of course we can admit such to be the fact in certain cases. The college cannot make material. But probably some who say this are, after all, mistaken. They do not realize in their mind the actual effect of the culture which they could not avoid. Much more is the value seen in successful men who came as boys from farms and workshops and country homes. They owe to the college the transformation of their lives. They had the patient watchfulness of earnest men discerning their needs. They had the indescribable influence which comes from thoughtful, learned, and cultivated superiors. They lived in an atmosphere of intellect, touched with the graces of Christian faith and sacrifice. The college professor is, with rare exceptions, not a man who is influenced in his devotion to his calling by the very moderate salary which is usually his lot. The personal influence of men of high character, men devoted to their work, men elevated above the commonplace, is of inestimable advantage to all students. I remember with reverent affection certain instructors whose influence has never left me. I owe to their memory a debt of gratitude, and a debt of gratitude to the college which could command the loyal service of such men in the work given them to do.

Daniel Webster had his own great intellect. No college could have made him. But the boy in the frontier home so close to the forest, which stretched from New England civilization to Canada, needed the college. It was the college which developed him. The classics, the sciences, the arts were there. There was the realm of the highest thought of the world into which he was introduced. The then humble college concentrated the wealth of intellect of all the ages. How nobly he acknowledged his obligation and how well he repaid that college in after years! I must quote his words before the Supreme Court of the United States, although doubtless familiar to many. It was at the close of his great argument in the famous Dartmouth College case, to sustain the

Obligation to One's College.

sacredness of the charters possessed by colleges as against the presumption of legislatures to divert the use of vested funds from the purposes of the donors. His massive argument was completed, but he could not refrain from an outburst of feeling: "It is, sir, as I have said, a small college. And yet *there are those who love it.*" A listener says: "Here the feeling which he had thus far succeeded in keeping down broke forth. His lips quivered, his firm cheeks trembled with emotion, his eyes were filled with tears, his voice choked." Tradition says that the strong men of that court were visibly affected, and that the suggestive emotion which he exhibited was not without its influence in determining the final result. It may not have been law, but great judges are men, and the colleges have made the great judges.

The recent drift toward uniting the graduates of a college to the college itself by giving them an influential voice in its affairs is significant. It is done by enabling them to vote in the selection of a portion of the administrative boards. This might seem at first a reasonless interference. The graduate has no inherent claim to such control. But there has arisen a sentiment that the college and its graduates are one institution. The college life is still in the veins of its sons. Those sons must have a tangible and working connection with the college to make their influence practical. These sons, thus admitted to direct co-operation, return a vitalizing power to what becomes more a brotherhood of learning than a mere corporation. In this country it is an experiment, but so far its result is promising. Certainly it is a sign of the interest and devotion of the graduate, and discloses the existence of an attachment which often had been slumbering. It suggests that the sons of a college will not stop with casting a vote once a year. They will carry out the obligations which they have acknowledged by ministering to every want.

There is one important method by which obligation can be met. If your son, my brother graduate, is fitting for college, where do you propose to send him? If left to the heedless influences of a school which drifts in some direction without the least reason therefor, he may naturally go with his fellows. But, I say it freely, the presumption is that one owes it to the college which has made him that he should give his own boy to his own *alma mater*. There are exceptions, of course; but the reasons for them should be strong. A man who does not use his personal influence with his son in favor of his own college has little love for it, and does not deserve any special mark of love from it. I do not mean that a boy in the far West should necessarily pass by home institutions; rarely can he afford to do so. I assume also that the college is a good college, and that it keeps reasonably in line with the demands of the age. But it is something delightful to have a son walk under the same trees where the father walked, sit in the same recitation rooms, bow his head in the same chapel, and receive the same impress which his father received years before. It is pleasant to see the same surname for two or three or more generations in the general catalogue. It makes the college seem like a family inheritance. If one cannot give money to repay his debt, he may perhaps give his son. And if he does so he will receive back that son better nurtured and more cultured than he himself was — the better and the more because of the great growth in thought and life which his own beloved college has experienced

during these intervening years; and the son will have felt some subtle influence from the fact that his father had been there in the same halls a generation before.

No Need of Haste.

WRITING some time in advance of the date of this paper, I note that they would be getting in the last load of hay were it not for a shower which has thoroughly wet the cut grass. They were delayed somewhat by the fact that a man whom they had expected to help with his machine was obliged to cut his rye just when it had ripened. The sun ripens the cereals as he pleases. Sometimes he is a little early, sometimes he is a little late. The barley is ripening, too. So are the oats. I think there is no wheat raised here; it does not pay. Mind you, I am not looking at the great Dakota grain fields and the immense reapers drawn by six horses each. The laws of God are the same. The rye was winter rye and it was sown before the snows came. It lay under the white mantle till the mantle melted and the shoots came up.

The neighbor who sowed the rye was not impatient. If he had been it would have done no good. People who believe do not get impatient, at least they are patient in proportion to their believing. I do not think, however, that the patient waiting of my friend who sowed the rye was an illustration of faith. He believed that the rye would survive the winter, because he had known rye to do so ever since his earliest boyhood. He believed in the autumn that the snows would come, because snows had come every winter in his memory. He believed that the summer sun would transmute its golden rays into the grains of rye, because summer suns had always performed this alchemy. Believing from past experience is not faith. But if some person from the torrid zone, totally ignorant of our climate, had suddenly come here and witnessed the scattering of the rye seeds, and then saw the furious snow fall and felt the icy cold, and naturally was certain that the seed had perished, to believe the farmer's assertion to the contrary and his prediction of a harvest months onward, would have been faith in the farmer. Patience then would have been a merit. It would be walking by faith, not by sight.

I wish to suggest that impatience for results, at least in its tendency to cause discouragement, is not wise. Of course I run against the danger of seeming to justify indifference and inefficiency. But we are always running against dangers in every discussion. We have often heard it alleged as a remarkable qualification that some men are "hustlers." I do not know the origin of this term, but I frankly confess that it does not convey to me the idea of the highest kind of quality or even of force. I am sorry to shock somebody, but it seems to imply a tremendously busy man rushing around on frantic errands, planning and plotting without much depth in either, and doing a rapid business as long as his courage lasts. I may be entirely mistaken, and perhaps a "hustler" is merely a man of activity and energy. If so let us hope that some respectable word may be substituted. Let us have something which does not on the face of it suggest what is hasty, superficial, and temporary.

No Need of Haste.

Last summer, in some lowlands not far from where I am now writing, I had a two-mile drive in a dark evening. There was as gorgeous a display by fireflies as I had ever witnessed. Literally, there must have been millions of them. It was a beautiful scene, but I prefer something more permanent for light. The fireflies die in twenty-four hours. I prefer the moonlight. During a lifetime we find it more reliable. We can look forward and calculate. Some societies have their monthly meetings on the Wednesday or Thursday "nearest the full of the moon," and they could, if they cared to, specify the proper day of each month for generations to come. There is steadiness in this reckoning. Plans which look forward patiently are plans which accomplish most in this world. The fireflies were flitting and dancing in every direction. I wonder if they had any purpose.

In the obscure realm uniting the common laws of nature and the subtle and invisible laws of mental and spiritual progress there is certainly room for real faith. It may be that the spiritual laws are as exact as the laws of the planting and reaping, but we do not see them so clearly. Certainly we do not see progress so readily. Plans have to be laid. Their development must reach into the future. Work will not amount to much if it does not have its place in some outline which looks considerably forward. Of course there are daily routine duties which require little planning as to the future because their execution is hardly in the future. But just according to the length of the future required for ripening must be the forward extent of the plan proposed. I think if I were in the pastorate I should plan the general outlines of even pulpit work for a year at a time. One could not plan this very minutely, and flexibility would demand a place, but the salient points could be established with a view to a systematic presentation of truth adapted to the needs of all classes of hearers. This would require faith in the plan, but it would rest upon the belief that a well-instructed congregation, not left in ignorance of any of the great Scripture truths, would eventually best exhibit the influence of the Word of God. To do this one would have to sacrifice much firefly business. It requires patient faith to wait for the results of far-reaching plans.

More than this, it is a sign of true faith in God's methods that one patiently endures disappointment in the slowness of movements near at heart. We think that certain great objects ought to be immediately accomplished. We devise short cuts to the desired result. If these fail we may think that the movement fails. But this is not so. Great movements never fail. We can remember, some of us, when a general said that the campaign near at hand was to be "short, sharp and decisive." But this was not to be. It took that year's campaign and two years more of war before the end came. There is seldom much lost, if anything, in the delay which appears to belong to most advance. If one has faith he knows that success is sure in due time. There may be apparent setbacks. Some petty legislation in religious circles, for instance, may appear decisive. But if it stands in the way of healthy progress it is a mere eddy on the edge of a great stream, or a slight ripple on the surface of the water. It is a sad thought, but terribly significant, that the coming generation will soon be put in control by five years of deaths. See what that generation is and you see what will soon be in power, and

what will be in power simply by the inexorable law, which you can leave to itself.

Patience. Things are not going to destruction yet. I will turn to what may seem a not very dignified illustration, which I use for its practical value. It is not a case unknown to some who read this when a brother in distress and alarm will come for advice. He pours out substantially as follows: "What can we do? Our minister is not satisfactory. He does not draw the young folks. We are falling off. The subscriptions are diminishing. Our congregation is n't half what it was two years ago. Brother So-and-so does not like him, Sister So-and-so is tired of his preaching. The Methodist church will go right by us if this thing continues. Strange that the deacons don't see it, but his friends stand by him. We must get rid of him, or we shall go all to pieces." Now, assuming what is not always the case, that there is a lack of success, the proper answer is about like this: "No, brother, your church is not going to pieces. The other church is not going by you. Your congregation has not fallen off fifty per cent. If a change is really needed the deacons will soon see it. Those whom you call the minister's 'friends' will also see it. If you endeavor to turn out the minister by force of numbers you will make people think he is persecuted, and you will simply create a division which will probably last a generation. Be quiet. Do your own duty as a Christian. Things will inevitably take their own course. When a change is needed the minister usually has sense enough to know it and grace enough to make it. If not, the time will come when the necessity will be apparent. Do you drop the whole subject and let what you call his 'friends' bear the responsibility. You can endure as long as they can."

This principle will hold good in other places besides a church. A rigid and uncompromising power may wisely be left alone to bear the entire responsibility and reap the inevitable consequences. It will learn wisdom and reform itself.

Misunderstandings.

I RECEIVED a letter, no matter when, from one with whom I had been on intimate terms years ago. He had removed to a distance, and I had not seen him for a long while, but he had now returned to a nearer locality. The letter pained me beyond description. He thought that my regard for him had ceased. He had just been to the grave of one very dear to each of us, and the visit had led him to make an attempt at discovering what had estranged us. Something which I had done had forced him to believe that if there ever had been friendship between us it had ended on my part. Years ago I "had attended the funeral of one dear child and baptized another," and his heart had now conquered some pride, and so he wrote the letter. "I cannot but think," wrote he, "that there must be some mistake somewhere, which if it exists better be corrected before we are called to meet up yonder." It seemed probable, from the drift of his letter, that I had somewhere met him since his return and had ignored his presence. I was more than grieved, especially grieved if any act

Misunderstandings.

of mine had hurt the feelings of one whose friendship had always been dear to me. I honor him the more because after painful delay he did not stand upon injured dignity. Why should I not prize the friendship of this man, whose real worth and noble heart I knew so well? One thing he did not know except by my answer. That one thing explained the whole. My heart had never failed. I had met him and did not know it. All was explained, and affection ran in the old channels.

It is easy to see how a misunderstanding may arise between warm friends. It is also easy to see how readily it often may be corrected. In many cases all that is needed is frankness. A sensitive nature sometimes feels hurt when there is no real occasion for it. It may be that a little pride will stand in the way of a better understanding. The person who is supposed to have done something unkind may have done nothing of the sort. Sometimes talkative friends or meddlesome gossips may have misrepresented the one to the other, and an entirely innocent person is an apparent offender. A grieved person should not allow friendship to be broken by such means. Let him go to his friend and frankly tell him his trouble. If affection is worth prizing it is certainly entitled to this effort.

Perhaps there may have been really some thoughtless word or act which grieved another but whose bearing the careless person did not realize. Even then it is worth while to have the irritation removed. Every one knows that an unkind word or act, whether real or imagined, hurts the most where friendship is closest and tenderest. The delicacy of the most sympathetic relations makes them the most sensitive. The finest magnetic conditions in the instruments are jarred the easiest. Now, the apparent unkindness does not represent the true nature. I shall misunderstand some friend if I let an occasional rough word represent to me what he really is. I should take his whole soul as the reality, and not a thoughtless word. If the word pains me too much I should go to him who, if he be a real friend, will be sorry for it.

I doubt not that some people will remember cases where a foolish misunderstanding has separated one whole life from another. It began with a petty mistake, it went on into offended pride, it developed into permanent alienation. It may have made one life or the other unhappy. Frankness at the beginning would have prevented the evil. An early mistake, an early misunderstanding, runs through a lifetime.

One comes, in due course of years, to feel that he cannot afford to lose friends. I have that feeling. They go away full fast enough through God's providence. The old friends have proved their worth and their faithfulness. It is too late to make friendships of the same kind, except in isolated instances. We must not let needless alienations take place. We may differ, but we must not misunderstand each other. I have in mind a classmate with whom I have many things in sympathy, while we disagree as to what is advisable in some matters of common interest. But I know his heart and his nature and, therefore, I do not misunderstand him. I could trust his fidelity implicitly. I cannot afford to lose it because our ideas are not always alike. I never misunderstand the *man* in this instance. There is a plain distinction between understanding the man and understanding everything he says or does. So there is

a distinction between misunderstanding the man and misunderstanding what he does. So, again, we need not confound misunderstanding with alienation. The former may cause the latter, and that is the danger.

Sometimes a misunderstanding, in the sense of really not understanding, has been productive of great evil. I recall an instance, in the great war, where an officer brought an order to the young commander of a regiment to make an assault upon the opposite works thickly lined with the enemy's troops. "Is that the order?" asked the soldier in command. "It is," insisted the one who brought it. "It 's murder," was the answer, "but it 's the order." It was obeyed, but it cost more than forty per cent of the men called to this sacrifice. The order originally issued had merely been to make a "demonstration," but the ignorant intermediate had changed the word to "assault," not knowing the difference. His lack of understanding was fatal to many a brave man. Persons who think that accuracy and exactness are of little account will seldom find so serious an example of the opposite as the one thus afforded, but the principle is the same.

People differ so widely, if I may extend this subject, that a mutual understanding is next to impossible. Mind, I must not confuse "mutual understanding" with "mutual agreement" as to what is most expedient. They may understand facts exactly alike and yet differ as to what ought to be done in view of these facts. But men seldom do agree as to facts, and therefore there is little possibility of arriving at satisfactory results. They misunderstand. What debates do we have, or are likely to have, in which two parties can begin with settled right understanding of the premises on both sides? Much time must be spent in what is little better than wrangling before tolerably clear ideas can emerge out of smoke so that both can see them alike. If this can be accomplished men have much greater probability of coming to agreements. They may not come to agreement, but they will have at least a definite point of issue. In view of a recent example in a great criminal trial one could almost wish that our religious and ecclesiastical differences could be subjected to legal methods of determination. The question of admitting certain important evidence turned upon questions of fact involving a serious number of items. The counsel on the respective sides agreed upon a somewhat extended statement of facts, and upon this united statement the judgment of the court was asked. The decision of the court was then readily secured. Probably no such agreed statement — however humiliating is the admission — could be had in religious differences, because of the absence of any constraining power controlling its method. We must trust ourselves in a maze of partisan contradictions and prejudices.

I must return to the particular thought with which I began. It is sad to have friendships sundered. It is sad, indeed, to have them broken when some misunderstanding is the sole cause. It is especially sad when the misunderstanding might be removed if the one who feels injured would not cherish what he considers to be a proper pride. Nor should either party who discovers that alienation exists wait for the other. Do not hazard a life-long regret by waiting for your friend to make advances. Friendship has no place for pride. May I not say that young people are the ones who are most likely to need these hints?

Providentials.

I HAD an occasion to think of these, at least to consider whether certain particular occurrences were specially prepared to fit certain exigencies. That they fitted was clear. But my thought sometimes vibrates between a system in which everything is an inevitable result of something preceding and a system in which an intelligent Lord does what is needed at the instant when it is needed. I wonder if others have the same experience. If so let us consider.

Plans are not always visible. More than sixty years ago there came to America by different routes four or five boxes of iron apparently relics of disused machinery. They came to the town of my boyhood. It happened thus. The corporation which had begun making calico prints, without great success, sent an agent to England who engaged the services of an experienced calico printer, who was to come to New Hampshire and conduct the new business. The son of the Englishman, who came over later, told me the story years ago. The master printer was to take over to this country a four-color printing machine to supersede the old block method, as well as an imperfect two-color machine already invented at the works to which I have alluded. But England then did not permit the exportation of a calico printing machine. The new master skilfully avoided the difficulty. He secretly took a machine to pieces and separated the whole into four or five parts, taking care that no two pieces in one parcel should fit each other if he could prevent it, and he added other wheels and pieces of small machinery which did not belong to such works. He sent the separate boxes of what was apparently old iron to as many different ports for exportation. The customs officers examined the contents carefully but saw nothing suspicious. The iron reached New Hampshire without difficulty and was brought to the shops, where the new master put together the machine.

To the officials at the English ports of departure these pieces were simply old iron. The inspectors saw no semblance of an object in them. The parts did not fit each other. Nor could they make what they were designed to make until all had crossed the ocean from the piers in scattered cities and had been grouped where the master mind collected them. They were, nevertheless, parts of a single plan while being tossed about on the ocean billows in vessels which did not speak each other.

The first piece of calico print from this machine was the artistic evidence of design in the plan. But the history, in both its breadth and details, necessarily had an intelligent thinker to make it. That nobody understood the plan but himself only the more proves that this one person did understand it. I can readily see that iron and copper have natural qualities which are inherent, but iron and copper never of their own inherent forces make themselves into cog-wheels and cylinders and start for different ports, and leave those ports to cross the ocean and come together and print designs on cotton cloth.

When I find in my life some concentration of scattered events at a point where a special result evidently fits a particular exigency, is it not reasonable for me to say that an intelligent ruler intended it and planned it? In fact, would it not be unreasonable in me to doubt it? Is it any objection that the

various contributing events were scattered like the cogged wheels, and as much hidden from sight for the time as they were? Do not common sense and the divine promises in the Word of God perfectly coincide? Can I strike intelligence out of that which controls the soul's history when I cannot strike it out of the government of machinery? Can I, indeed, believe that the principles of intelligent and intentional care cease to exist when we reach the higher domain of spiritual and eternal life, and that there no special needs are to be provided for and no special wants supplied?

Thus far we have been thinking of some special emergency, met through unseen plans, developing unity at the proper time. But I see no necessity of limiting our hope to single prominent events. The divine idea, as given to us from the Word of God, is the more beautiful one, that all things are ready at all times, prepared with the care which would be requisite for what we call emergencies. I like to think that all providences are special. The whole life of a disciple, it is promised, shall be under the divine watch. But there are two ways of looking at this hope. I have a friend, a Christian in his faith, who says that all things are special providences, but who bases this assertion upon the belief that an original force sets in motion all things upon an intelligent plan, and that the things which this force evolves are for the highest good of God's people in every event. He leaves out, of course, what may be called divine interpositions. I do not quite like his theory. It seems to me to be parallel with the working of a stationary engine, wherein there are movements of little parts which appear to be sometimes independent interpositions, but which really are ingeniously caused by the single central force itself. The life which has its special wants at special times, and asks for special helps, wants them at the hand of a watchful father and not through the valves whose workings are back in the creation. We want the waters of the healing pool to be always bubbling with healthful life rather than to be left to deadness save at intermittent intervals, but it is a sweet belief that an angel causes the waters to effervesce, and we want our Lord to send the angel.

That is, Christian faith demands precisely such divine care and help as would exist if, in any emergency, God was specially present to relieve, to strengthen, to provide. We may call it what we will. Rising into the spiritual realm, we get above the impersonal law and find a personal government. There is need, and the needy asks for supplies, and there is answer. There is danger, and the one helpless in peril demands assistance, and the Lord sends it. There is sorrow, and the sorrowful calls to Him who has promised peace, and the peace comes. Why not make the best of the assurances revealed by God Himself? There is a realm wherein are the numberless messengers of God. The messengers go to do the divine bidding. They are sent to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. They are to encamp around those who are in hostile lands. In the organizations of the spiritual life, in divisions and among rulers, how much more glorious is the thought that allotted work awaits orders than that God's system of redemption and salvation is a dead machinery. It is easy, it is Christian, to believe in the special missions for the needy. A watchful eye sees the occasion and the order is not unreasonable: "There is one of the King's Daughters travelling a hard road and she is tired; detail an angel to touch her hand and help her on." Why not?

Providentials.

Was it a providence when to the Pilgrims, well-nigh starving on the bleak shores, there came a vessel laden with provisions? Many will say that it was only a remarkably fortunate coincidence. Somebody in England, of course, ordered the loading of the vessel and its sailing. Some man told him to do it. A man could give that order. Was it impossible for an Almighty God to say to the proper person, "My poor people at New Plymouth will be getting very hungry soon. Load a vessel at once with food and send it there"? If God could not give this order and make it understood, then He was more powerless than some common man who has been dead nearly three hundred years.

Conscientious Convictions.

THESE are to be respected, but they are not conclusive. On the contrary, their existence may be the exact reason for opposition to those holding them. For instance, if I am a Republican in politics, no one could persuade me to vote for a Democratic candidate on the ground that he is thoroughly conscientious in his political opinions. In fact, his sincere convictions end all doubt, and make it impossible for me to vote for him. That candidate may also be a most excellent man, but still I cannot vote for him. I do not believe in slavish obedience to party, but a principle is involved. I remember hearing my father ask a neighbor how he could vote for a notoriously bad man who had been nominated for office. The hot-headed, partisan answer came, "I would vote for the devil himself if he was on the Whig ticket." I was a mere boy then, and I know that the Christian man who said it was carried away by the excitement of a political campaign, and I remember the after years of that man's sincere and serene faith. He was a Whig, and would vote for no person who was not a Whig, and therein he was right if he was an honest Whig; but he erred in forgetting that a bad man, whatever be his party, is not the proper material for office.

I am almost afraid to allude to anything political. Perhaps two or three years ago I chanced to say in one of my papers that a man who voluntarily takes part in a nominating caucus is bound in honor to abide by its result, provided the proceedings are conducted with ordinary fairness and one who is not a bad man is nominated. I thought it self-evident that one is not relieved from this obligation by having his own preference defeated. My theory was that if one is not willing to abide by this obvious understanding he can preserve entire freedom by keeping outside of the caucus. To my surprise, I was violently attacked by a correspondent in a secular paper — who was manly enough to sign his name, a name entitled to respect — for advancing such a view. I did not reply, because no argument could make the proposition any clearer or give it any more force than is found in its mere statement. Circumstances prevented my reading the article, although I was informed of its purport. Perhaps the incident makes me a little shy of alluding to politics. Still I remember that I refused to take part in a "bolt" in a Massachusetts

city where I was a pastor, inasmuch as I had taken part in the caucus. A "bolt" was tried and failed. The next year a number of us informed the party managers that we should not go to the caucus, but that if they renominated the same person we should organize for another man. The managers laughed at us, but we did as we had promised, and we swept the polls. It was the best way to defeat bad nominations, especially when a skilful clique had got control.

But I must repeat that conscientious convictions on the wrong side, naturally meaning the side which I do not favor, should have no force with me. Do not tell me that he is conscientious. That makes it all the worse. I respect him the more, but I reject him the quicker. People sometimes say one should vote for the best man without regard to party. No. Where a political principle is at stake I want the "best man" *plus* one who holds my own convictions. If I were a Prohibitionist I would not vote for an angel who believed in license. If I were a Democrat I would vote against Gabriel if he advocated a high protective tariff

It is by rather a flanking process, therefore, that we come now to religious matters. No amount of conscientiousness in error can be pleaded as a reason for supporting that error. This may seem illiberal to some whose sympathies are warm and whose tendencies are kindly. It may involve at times the appearance of conceit in determining what is erroneous. Knowing our liability to be mistaken, all of us should be charitable. But we must do the best we can and ascertain truth to the best of our ability. It is not necessary, nor is it right, to suspect that one who differs from us is not just as conscientious and as well intentioned as we are. The fact of conscientiousness does not prove that one is right, for two persons may be equally conscientious on exactly opposite sides when one of them is necessarily wrong. Nevertheless, we must have our convictions and must abide by them. A young Unitarian minister once said to me, "Nothing is of importance but sincerity." I do not think that he would now use just this language. I could not properly ask a Unitarian to assist in supporting Trinitarian preaching, with all the doctrines which logically belong thereto. That any preacher is thoroughly conscientious is no reason why an opponent of his views should support him. It has been sometimes said that our churches do not allow liberty in the pulpit — that if the minister preached doctrines contrary to their own views he would be set aside. There is truth in this and justice in what the complaint condemns. If our people believe that what we call the doctrines of the cross of Christ are the truth of God, if these doctrines are vitally dear to their own hearts, and if they are in church covenant that this truth may bless them and their children, they have no right to sustain any man in destroying this truth because he is conscientious. I do not suppose that there is a Unitarian congregation in the world which would retain a minister who had come to believe, with all his conscience, in the truth of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. His conscientiousness, his sincerity, would have leave to take the catechism elsewhere. And the Unitarian would be right.

Conscientious convictions are no rule for anybody except for the one who holds them. They are entitled to consideration, and they are free from the contempt which one feels for insincerity. But we cannot forget that conscientious-

Conscientious Convictions.

ness led Paul to persecute the saints. It was this which delivered Huss to the flames in Bohemia and Servetus in Geneva. It was the undoubted attribute which gave nerve to the inquisitors who worked the rack and piled the fagots around the stake. There never was a persecution in England, alternating between Catholic and Protestant, nor a persecution of Puritanism by prelacy, nor a persecution of the Quaker by the Puritan in the drum beats which escorted the victims to the gallows on Boston Common, which did not have not only the sanction but the resistless force of an undoubted conscientiousness, which believed that God demanded this tribute to His glory. The student of history should lay this lesson to heart. He will not ask one to weaken the sacredness of his conscientious convictions, but he will not regard them as infallible. He will himself be taught to walk in humility and in charity toward all men.

When honest convictions oppose each other what can be done? Can the differences be compromised? If they concern realities, no. That is, if this means, dividing half way. The proper reconciliation can be had only when a central fact or thought grasps what is good on either side and blends it all together. If there were a doctrine which practically excluded the humanity of the divine Saviour and if there were another which practically excluded the divinity of the human brother, the true reconciliation would be that which destroys the negation in each and unites the human and divine in our blessed Master. This principle comprehends: it does not compromise.

But where differences are not those of vital principles, but rather of methods and measures, one of two things can certainly be accomplished. Either the point of difference may be in some manner removed from the sphere of discussion, or good and wise men will certainly be able to come to some agreement by calm and temperate discussion, without injury to the conscientious convictions of either.

Good Old Times.

THAT the old times were better than the new is, of course, a fact, at least in the opinion of most persons past middle age. Things degenerate. The flavor of Thanksgiving dinners has certainly depreciated, as compared with those which were cooked when we were ten years of age. Turkeys are not so plump and tender, chickens are not so delicate, cranberries have not such a delicious acid, pumpkins are more coarse in grain, puddings do not have so many plums in them — and nobody can cook as our mothers did when we were children. These things are all settled. And yet how strange it is that the children do not seem to believe it! Some of them, indeed, lack privileges. Actually, I once found in Tennessee a little girl of seven years who had never heard of Mother Goose. I sent to Boston and procured the book for her, with which she was greatly delighted. I am not sure that it was right in me to stimulate her mind in such ambitious directions. Her mother and aunt called her "Nugget," as a pet name. I wonder if she is living. If so, she is now thirty-seven years old.

But my mind turns toward the good old times of our early colonial history, when our churches were in their pure infancy, and about the epoch of the original Thanksgiving Day. When we speak of the good old times, indeed, we ordinarily have in mind the faiths and methods which became concrete and stiffened, like plaster of Paris, about forty years ago. Every variation since is degeneracy. But it is noticeable that many people about that time sighed for the good old times of forty years before that. And so it always was, in successive stages, with each of these periods, a falling away from its predecessor. What wonderful perfection of faith and practice, as well as of cooking, there must have been in the beginning! Strike into history anywhere — I mean New England history — and we find the same sadness over the loss of the good old times. Cotton Mather, for example, wrote enough to make several books of Lamentations, whose authorship the most perverse higher criticism cannot subdivide or dispute. His father, Increase Mather, the great president of Harvard College, could not be equalled, and of his two grandfathers, John Cotton was the unapproachable minister of Boston and Richard Mather the equally unapproachable minister of Dorchester. All afterward was degeneracy.

But I am not so sure that we should find the earliest good old times Congregationally perfect. We are distressed by reason of present speculations in doctrine. The first ten years of Massachusetts churches must have been a paradise, but that decade had not reached its last quarter when a mighty council had to be called to stop the spread of heresies. That council consisted of "all the teaching elders through the country" and of "messengers from the churches," "about twenty-five godly ministers of Christ, besides many other graciously eminent servants of His." They deliberated long and faithfully and in the result specified and condemned eighty-two "erroneous opinions" and nine "unwholesome expressions," all of which were then current in the churches. So dangerous was the condition that the magistrates forced all persons holding such opinions to bring in to an appointed official all their swords, guns, and other implements of war, lest false doctrine should be established. So great was the danger that when it was proposed to organize what is now the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, the magistrates paused, and at last commissioned the officers only after they had passed a satisfactory doctrinal examination as to the work of the Holy Spirit and justification by faith. Anne Hutchinson, condemned to banishment in 1638 for heresy, held to "conditional immortality," but any who mourn over this heresy as now existing should remember that they had not only this error but also eighty-one more heresies in these good old times.

I am not sure, also, that our Congregational polity needs to mourn over its changes from that of the early days. In fact, I care very little for quotations from the early writers. Very few of these writers furnish us with anything but historical relics. A few of them held to the vital principles of polity which have been perpetuated. In those times none but church members could vote in civil affairs. The New Hampshire towns in 1641 refused to come under the Massachusetts government with this restriction of suffrage and it was set aside in their favor. It is interesting to note that not one of the early churches of that province, where one did not have to join the church to become a voter, ever became Unitarian.

Good Old Times.

Then, again, the State ordered the calling of councils and synods when it thought them needful. Nor could a church be organized anywhere without the consent of the magistrates, and those officials summarily suppressed such organizations at pleasure. It was also held, though not always carried out, that no church member could be allowed to leave one parish and go to another without the consent of the authorities. These were the rules in the good old times.

In old times, and even into the memory of the present generation, the Cambridge Platform of policy was, or was supposed to be, in force in our churches. Probably few persons know that the Congregationalism of this document asserts that no act of the church is in force, or has any authority, unless approved by the pastor or board of elders. Such authority was actually claimed in a Massachusetts church only fifty years ago by one who had regard for the good old times, when it suited his purposes. That platform also declares that "heresy [and] venting corrupt and pernicious opinions" are among the things "to be restrained and punished by civil authority"; and the magistrate is to "put forth his coercive power when any church shall grow schismatical." These were good old times.

There were also some habits in those days to which we probably should not wish to return. Lechford tells us, in 1641, how two ministers on the banks of the Pascataqua fell out with each other regarding "the burial of the dead." This would be difficult to understand until we learn that our Puritan predecessors allowed no religious service whatever at funerals — no prayer, no word of remark, no Scripture and, of course, no hymn. They carried the body out and buried it. That was all. This was a matter of pure principle. One church made its declaration regarding this point upon the assertion that the Bible gave no instance of religious services at burials, and, therefore, that no minister had any such function or right. This was because they were afraid of papal doctrine. It was for many years a characteristic of the good old times.

Another such was the refusal to allow any portion of Scripture to be read in public worship. The minsters of the Church of England read such selections, and therefore our ministers should not. Many years elapsed before this rule broke down. The new practice was resisted as strenuously as was the introduction of stoves into meeting houses. The fathers would have been horrified if any portion of the Word of God had been read in the sanctuary — only it was not a sanctuary. How much more horrified would have been one of the early Congregationalists if he had dreamed that any church would not only put the reading of Scripture upon its order of service, but would also add the responsive reading of Psalms and the Lord's Prayer, to say nothing of the Apostles' Creed and the *Gloria Patri*. It is on record that when the official brethren of a certain church were earnestly discussing the proposed innovation of reading the Scriptures one brother, chancing to open the great Bible at its titlepage, suddenly remarked, "Why brethren, here it is settled right in the Bible itself; 'Appointed to be read in the churches' is right on the title-page!" That decided the question at once. The good old times had to give way.

However, "good old times" means exactly forty years ago, and should never

go back of that, for at that date the present mourners were innovators, and their elders were then mourning over the loss of the good old times of the next earlier forty years. Forty years from now the adventurous young men of to-day will be mournfully talking of the good old times.

Definiteness.

As to church music, they tried the experiment in the church of my youth of having congregational singing purely, led by one man who had a powerful voice and who was hired for that purpose. Of course they had the organ. The leader had a theory that the words of a hymn ought not to be clearly pronounced. He thought the words hurt the music. It was quite a long time ago, but I heard that Doxology so often that its rendering by that leader is perfectly clear in my memory. Here it is: —

"Ray au vrau oo au bleh-ee vlo,
Ray ee au re-oo ee uh-o."

Pardon me if I omit the other two lines.

I have recently tried to make out the names of places on a particular railroad, as announced by a certain trainman. One name, given with a flourish, is *Au-cee*. By watchfulness I have discovered that this means Forest Hills. So *Eh-rrr*, with an extended and mournful wail on the end, means Central. Then *Au-y-aa-er* (if I can possibly reproduce the word) means Roslindale. I commend to the authorities of that railway the propriety of assisting in the further education of that particular young man. Most of the men on that road, however, talk excellent English. But the dialect to which I have repeatedly listened has recalled to me the Doxology of my earlier days. History repeats itself.

I do not think that the railway man's method is calculated to give information to any one who needs it, nor that the musical leader's voice was likely to guide the congregation in the singing of any hymns beyond the familiar Doxology. Yet power was abundant in each. Definiteness and precision were wanting. Possibly the musical corner of the church may not be the only place which needs attention. That is, it is possible that a kind of vagueness in religious thought and teaching may have crept in unawares to some extent. A good and experienced Christian not long ago said: "We have had a number of persons preach in our pulpit, and there seems to be one feature in most of them. They talk well, but just as they seem about to say something they stop and go off to something else." They are really afraid of being considered dogmatic. This in itself is worthy of respect, provided we take the word "dogmatic" in an offensive sense. But doctrine and dogma need not be confounded. If it will make the matter easier, we can say, "statements of truth," instead of doctrine. I suppose that this vagueness is a reaction from a former attempt to define every truth as sharply as if it were geometrical. The weakness of utterance may come from some other cause. Thirty years ago it was considered a great commendation in some parts of New England to say that a minister was a very "discriminating" preacher. By this was meant

Definiteness.

that he applied a subtle analysis to the doctrines so sharply that he could accurately separate off the different shades of meaning, and especially discriminate between truth and error, which was dangerously plausible because like truth. That painful analysis had two effects: it made strong theologians and earnest men in the pews, and it made ordinary people tired of religion in general as thus portrayed.

But it is useless to expect great results without positiveness. It is useless to expect positiveness without definite beliefs. It is useless to expect definite beliefs without definitions. No man can well communicate truth to others if he cannot state it in language which can be understood. Nor need anybody be afraid to present his convictions, when called to, in the most direct and clearly defined words. The tariff men just now exhibit no hesitation, no vagueness, and no listlessness in their arguments. One may differ from another, but it is the man who has definite principles and who is bold enough to advance them who gets a hearing and impresses his readers or his listeners. If a preacher is to preach in the style of the singing leader's doxology, which I began by quoting, he need not expect success. If he treats the way-marks of human lives and the destinations of those lives after the fashion of my train-man's muddle he need not expect to affect men's progress in good or evil.

It might at first be a surprise that good Christian people grow in grace, for the time being, under vague preaching. But it is easily explained. They, in their goodness, interpret the vague utterances in accordance with their own solid Christian faith, and by that faith. It takes time, and perhaps the coming of another generation, to find the effect of the lack of positiveness and solidity. On the other hand, we have an illustration of what the people crave, at least in the vicinity of Boston. The Methodist Bureau, attached to their Divinity School, actively furnishes, by means of circulars and otherwise, a good many preachers to our churches of moderate size. It meets with success in part by the fact that it furnishes supplies at low cost. But beyond this, and outside of this bureau, there have come to us some of our best beloved and most successful men. In either case one result is marked. The preaching of these brethren usually exhibits a completely definite understanding of gospel truth according to their doctrinal system, evangelical in character, and capable of being preached with clearness, directness, and boldness. They do preach in this manner, and the people relish it. By the way, the habit of some of our strong churches in getting Methodist professors to supply their pulpits in times of vacancy, in preference to taking our own ministers, certainly has a strange look. Does it imply that our own denomination cannot furnish preachers of ability? Does it mean that our own men are not as sound in doctrine as Methodists? Or, is it a contempt for the interests of our own denomination?

There is nothing lost by definiteness and explicitness. Any system of study which does not contemplate definiteness of belief will fail to develop strong men.

A good deal of speculative philosophy, much of it in defence of orthodoxy and much of it in the reverse, has reminded me of the story in that charming philosophical work, "The Arabian Nights," where the fisherman's net drew up a small copper box, in which was confined, under seal, a genie. It will be re-

membered that when the fisherman opened the box there came out a smoke and cloud, which soon expanded until it covered the land and sea, and then condensed into a genie twice the size of a giant. The wily fisherman, threatened with death, induced the genie to go back into the box to prove that he had ever been in it. Turning first to smoke and vapor again, the strange being gradually settled back into his old receptacle, on which the fisherman immediately replaced the cover. It was and is surprising what an enormous amount of smoke and vapor, when condensed, may be put into a very small box.

Grooves.

KEBLE'S "Christian Year" is, as everybody knows, a delightful work. It gives us appropriate poems for each Sunday and all the Christian holidays in the year as held by the Church of England and its kindred church in this country. It has passed through a very great number of editions, and perhaps will never lose its place in the affection of Christian people. Underlying it, however, is the Christian year itself, or the affixing to each Sunday and each holiday some special and permanent doctrine or fact for thought and for incentive to worship, which together embrace all the great doctrines of our faith. This system is an historic legacy. At every recurring date it presents the incarnation, the trinity, the suffering of our Lord, the resurrection, the ascension, with practical truth illustrated in the intervals. In the course of the year no great spiritual fact escapes attention.

Our Puritan fathers rejected this whole system. They threw aside, not only saints' days, but Christmas and the days of suffering, death, and the resurrection. They believed that such set methods ran religion into formal grooves which destroyed spirituality. Perhaps they confounded spontaneity and spirituality, and thought that nothing could be spiritual which was not a sudden outburst. Perhaps grooves, after all, are not necessarily evil. The iron rails of railways are grooves. They do not destroy power; they are important for its guidance and its success. Perhaps the absence of orderly thought helps make visionaries. However this may be, our people abjured the Christian year. They longed for freedom, and they secured it. They revelled in their emancipation from the bondage which attached special Scriptures and special prayers to set days and particular Sundays. It was the Puritan heritage that the minister, guided by the Spirit, should select appropriate subjects and appropriate Scriptures for every religious service, as the wants of the people might seem to indicate at the time. Especially was it regarded as absurd that any great church should lay out a course of study, thought, and worship for a year, although it might have the experience of ages and might clearly cover the whole scope of Christian faith.

But a remarkable reaction seems to have set in. The children of Israel once wished they were back in Egypt. Our people do not go to that extreme, but they are making little Egypts of their own. Glance at them. See what we are substituting for the old-fashioned Christian year. I have before me a list of items for which the people of the land were exhorted by some alliance, representing no Christian denominations as such, to pray during the first week of

Grooves.

the calendar year. In fact, two of them are now before me. Each list contains twenty-six items. It seems quite a convenience to have a comprehensive list made out for us, but the question arises whether it was not crowding rather too many topics into one week, and what particular reason there was for assigning them to particular days in that particular week, instead of scattering them over a longer period (say six months or twenty-six Sundays), or by what authority the assignment was made. I am not now objecting in the least degree to the plan, itself. The plan, it is to be noticed, is simply a return to grooves. It is an arbitrary invention of somebody, without root, however, in the experience of the church.

Another illustration, or evidence, of a reversal of the old theory of our fathers is found in the greatly prevalent system of Sunday school instruction. For some years past the selections of Scripture to be used each Sunday in the year by all our churches have been kindly decided upon by some committee, which is appointed — I must confess my sad ignorance — by some body or convention whose very name I know nothing about. I have attended our own ecclesiastical gatherings perhaps as often as most men, but I do not remember any appointment to this work by our churches. I am sure that I know the name, however, of the Congregational member of this committee — the only member whose name I do know — and I am entirely willing to accept, without hesitation, his judgment as to the wisdom of the selections. The matter is referred to simply as illustrating the fact that, after throwing over the set days of the old Christian year as savoring of formality, we accept a new Christian year for the instruction of our children, in which every Sabbath day has its assigned portion of truth for consideration. The system has great advantages. The uniformity in study which its general acceptance tended to secure was valuable. That this uniformity is now being impaired is true, but the substitute merely proposes another outline of a Christian year. The general and ready adoption of these systems shows the hunger of the people for the old method which the fathers discarded.

The Christian Endeavor Society advances a step further in the same direction. Its central authority provides the subjects for its meetings of prayer and conference everywhere to be used throughout the various local societies of this magnificent organization. It prints the list in vast numbers of copies. Wherever you go you find the one topic in any meeting of such a society. Last Sunday evening, being assured that I would be welcome, I was present at such a meeting. It was the night of the roll-call, which to me is always a solemn service. It never fails to carry me back to days when I used to hear the roll-calls of parts of another great army, the shortening lists of which were accounted for by "dead on the field of battle." It carries me forward in thought to the time when He who "calleth His sheep by name" shall ask for every one of them. But on that evening the topic was one I knew had been appointed, for I keep myself informed of the list. It included some distinctive features of truth as to prayer. It was a great convenience to know in advance the subject of that evening. The members themselves I saw had found it so. But it suggests simply the grave responsibility resting upon some committee, which selects the subjects of religious thought and the means of religious culture for a twelve-

month life of our young people, and which assigns to its fixed place the thought for every week in that year. It recognizes again the good of a Christian year. Whether it comprises the great doctrines and the great historical Christian events is a part of the responsibility laid upon the managers of the system.

There is one more fact still more significant as to the thorough reversal of the Puritan idea. It is the large acceptance by pastors and others of the list of prayer meeting topics furnished to the churches, in which the church is provided with a specified topic for each weekly prayer meeting throughout the twelve months. The old theory held that the minister would watch the spiritual signs of the times in his congregation, and select with judicious care such portion of Scripture, such exposition thereof, and such application of its substance as might meet immediate wants. To do this rightly was sometimes perplexing. It required discernment. It necessitated sensitiveness to the spiritual atmosphere. But to do it was understood to be a part of the duty and privilege which freedom from old grooves had given to the minister and the church. As the prayer meeting is so greatly the test of a church's condition, and the place of the minister's less formal but greatly effective work, the importance of proper topics was evident. The topics assigned by the old Christian year were fixed in advance. We have now a system by which some benevolent Christians take all this labor upon themselves — make the proper selection of Scripture, declare the suitable theme, and print the whole with the proper dates. This is a great help to the minister. It relieves him from the necessity of considering the matter. He has ready made for him the proper topic, not only for one evening but for the whole year, all printed in a little book which he can carry in his pocket. There is the added advantage that he can find in the religious newspaper excellent editorials, or special articles by the best contributors, a week in advance of the assigned subject. If the minister does not feel it necessary to follow the furnished line of development, his deacons will. A great amount of Christian truth is thus presented in the course of the year. It is a new Christian year.

Such is human nature, such is Christian human nature. Its very faith runs in grooves. If one system is destroyed, the time comes when another crystallization takes its place. If there be no system one is likely to be made. I think that they taught in my boyhood that the asteroids were the pieces resulting from the explosion of some great planet. I believe that the scientific men have since said that they were formed directly from scattered cosmical matter. Whether our asteroidal little Christian years are explainable by the first theory or the second I do not know.

Sealed Orders.

If the story be a true one, that must have been a most impressive night scene in Virginia when Grant gave to each one of his group of silent generals a distinct sealed order specifying what its holder should do with his command in the gray of the coming dawn. When each as silently departed from the presence of the silent commander, he was to open the paper and learn what was to be his part in the great plan of battle.

Sealed Orders.

My thoughts have taken a particular drift, I may frankly say, from my looking upon a group of young men who are just going out into the active duties of their life work. On this very date there will be given to each of them a paper certifying that the formal preparation for practical service has been completed. Each is to begin the peculiar work to which he believes God has appointed him. As I have mingled with them and discussed with them some things which might tend to usefulness, I have repeatedly thought of the sealed orders of war time. The orders will come to these young men, orders which are yet to be opened. They are not found in the certificate. That was only a record.

So, too, a fortnight hence I shall be called upon to sign, with some other men, the diplomas of a college class. The first list which I attested was signed twenty-four years ago. The rolls of these years show the hundreds of young men who have gone out to do that work in the world for which extraordinary helps had been fitting them. But the parchments, bearing the great college seal, are not secret orders. Those orders are in the plan of God, and are to be revealed.

I suppose that every one who expects to do his work feels that there is an intense reality in the work to be done. Sometimes language betrays, perhaps ignorantly, the shallowness of men's thoughts. "While we are upon the stage of action," is a phrase not infrequent in literature. It lacks solidity. We are not upon a "stage of action"; the "stage" is for actors, but not for doers. That similar expression, "Act well your part, there all the honor lies," has even a more pronounced ignorance of true life. It characterizes life as a theatrical performance, whose highest merit is attained by the best expression of simulated and unreal passion. We are not to act a part; we are to do our work. They did not act a part on the Virginia battlefields. Every one destined to do great things, or little things that have great consequences, must have convictions of mighty realities. Frivolous habits and easy indifference are not methods to conquests. The Puritan power was in intense convictions. When that intensity began to wane the power began to wane with it.

All who have something to accomplish in life, being selected because they have concentration and consecration of purpose, will find orders which they are to open. How the revelation is to be made will be known when, and only when, the time of revelation comes. The generals had the silent missives just in time for issuing the necessary commands. They broke the seals in the darkness of the night by dim lights and under the trees. They were there because duty had placed them there. God's orders are always seasonable, and they come where the obedient are in place to wait for them. It is a foundation principle of true work that the call to that work by its divine authority will certainly be made known. It is equally true, I believe, that it will not be made known until the right moment. It is hidden from sight until sight is capable of receiving it. There is a timelock guarding the doors of God's hidden purposes.

Doubtless there are successive revelations of duty. When the demand of one has been accomplished there is fitness for the next, and the next comes. Suppose we call this "walking by faith." "Walking by faith," then, really

means that we take one step at a time, believing that the next step will follow. It is a pleasant custom for friends of one about taking a great ocean voyage to prepare letters dated in advance for each day of the voyage and to provide for the delivery of one a day, as if sent by some super-natural messenger who walked upon the waters. These letters are progressive in thought. I have some of them now. One of them was delivered on the Fourth of July and contained a little American flag. The next day was the first of a series of days of dangerous illness, strangely enough as if again on the Virginia malarial rivers. But in each of those successive days of helplessness and pain there was read to me a fresh letter, with its fresh date, from home. The kindest of friends were around me night and day, in reliefs like those of sentinels in other battle times; but the little letters were special revelations from home hearts. That each one was sealed until its own morning gave its message added power.

Doubtless this would be a still more adequate illustration, if the successive missives were successive orders and each order was based upon the fulfilment of its immediate predecessor. But the singleness of plan is alike in the two. What person who believes in a government by God but must believe in a purpose, a plan, and the appointment of instruments? Then come the orders. They must be as plain to the Omniscient as were the letters written for the ocean voyage. I have no trouble in believing that the successive commands come with and through the development of the soldier in life, if one chooses to express himself in that manner. But whatever is evolved must have been included potentially in that from which it comes. Here is the necessity for character and purpose, for intensity of conviction and resolute courage. For such God has work. For such God provides success. For such the impenetrable future is revealed when the sealed order comes and is opened. There is no need of prophecy. There is no need of anxiety. For the group which takes the paper certificates of past work there are visible orders waiting to be placed in their hands. The men may quietly depart and each when alone may open the first of them, which tells what he is to do with the next morning's light.

Do they not tell of some Eastern custom wherein one desirous of testing the future lighted a taper and fixed it upon a little support, which in the night should float down a slowly moving stream? And if the light was still burning when the taper passed around some distant point of land in the river which must hide it from sight then the prophecy was full of joy. What does that land point signify, beyond which sight cannot penetrate but into which the light may pass unquenched and steady?

Impartial Judgment.

Is impartial judgment possible? When we get beyond mathematics I think the possibility is doubtful. This does not mean that a decision may not be a right one, but that strict impartiality has not probably been the cause of that rightness. The impartial sense, if it exists, is in the man who decides and is not the attribute of the thing decided. A prejudiced mind may arrive at a conclusion which in itself is just, and may arrive at that conclusion through its very prej-

Impartial Judgment.

udices. A sailboat may reach the precise point it ought to reach by bending over till it seems in danger of capsizing, when an even keel would send the boat upon the rocks. It is plain that right results are no proof of impartial judgment.

But to rely upon such a principle as that just stated is not safe. Scales may weigh well though one arm be longer and heavier than the other. The evil may be rectified by a heavier weight for the shorter arm, but there is danger of interchanging the weight and the article weighed. Impartial scales are far better than trusting to some good results from bad scales. A prejudiced judgment may unfortunately happen to be on the wrong side. As near to impartiality as possible is certainly demanded.

Yet I confess myself to doubt its absolute possibility. The obstacles are too great. The strictest honesty of purpose is by no means conclusive. In coming to a decision regarding some particular thing a knowledge of all the facts which bear upon the subject is practically impossible, and ignorance warps the judgment. A knowledge of all the motives which affect the actions of others is practically impossible, and the judgment is affected by misunderstanding. When one wilfully, although honestly, shuts his eyes against facts and motives impartiality is, of course, out of the question. It is certainly a matter of grave doubt whether any person, in any position, accepts completely all which contributes to a fair judgment. He may think that he does, but human nature is human nature.

One's judgment is certainly warped by partisanship if he be a partisan. Who expects a political partisan of either party to be fair and just to the motives and measures of the opposite party? I may as well say, Who expects an ecclesiastical partisan to be fair and just to the motives and measures of opponents in his own ecclesiastical family? The stronger the convictions the less possible is it to exercise judicial fairness. He may be like Paul after his journey to Damascus, but he is very likely to be like Saul, at whose feet the clothing was laid while they stoned the martyr.

I think there may be a rude sense of right which expresses itself in an unguarded way, and in a way whose forms are open to severe criticism. We cannot but respect the sense of right, although it be rashly put into form. It is a delicate matter for me to touch upon recent ecclesiastical events in another part of the church catholic, but those events are public property. A great church pronounced judgment upon a great question. The question was the reliability of the Holy Scriptures. It is the great question before Christian people. The great church which had this question to meet was actuated by an intense belief in the absolute authority of those Scriptures. The rank and file of that mighty organization, the great common people in their homes and in their places of worship, loved those Scriptures with an intense jealousy of everything which seemed to them to tear them to pieces. They had been nurtured upon the very language through which their vital faith had grown. Men had spoken to them in those words, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was not bigotry, it was not persecution, which lay in the depths of their action. They cared little for great men or great scholars. They reiterated that to them the Scriptures were the Word of God, as their church had always asserted. It

is useless to decry this magnificent loyalty to the Bible. It has mighty power in it. But in formulating this expression of loyalty a calm observer may think that crudities are visible, that needless externals were honored as essentials, and that some uselessly untenable positions were taken. What will come of it all when time ripens reflections? I venture to believe that, while needless ultraism will fade away, the verdict of the great heart of that church will stand.

But there is another difficulty as to impartiality. It lies in the peculiar bent or drift of men's minds. Men cannot be expected to decide differently from what they themselves are. They would not be honest if they did. It is not necessary to suppose that they are biased by any personal interest or by any conscious leanings. But there are coincidences. It is a fact that the decisions in court two generations ago, which denied to so many of our churches what they insisted were their rights, were made by great chiefs who were in ecclesiastical sympathy with the denomination which profited thereby. No one could doubt the entire honesty of those judges. It was simply a parallel. Their mental conditions made any other decisions impossible, while not one of them would have entertained for a moment a thought of injuring those who suffered. Similarly, the judges who in the United States Supreme Court decided the Dred Scott case against the doctrine of equal rights and of human liberty were themselves slaveholders. They did not decide as they did from unworthy motives. It was simply a parallel. Their personal convictions as exhibited in their practice and their decision in court had a natural resemblance. There are occasional exceptions. The New Hampshire decision which, from the same premises, sustains the rights of our churches in exact opposition to the decisions of the Massachusetts court, was prepared by a chief who, I may be allowed to say, was at an opposite extreme from the faith of those churches. I believe that it is considered proper and wise to have our judges selected from the different political parties with some degree of equality, and this for obvious reasons. Decisions on certain points of a political, social, or corporate character may frequently be safely prophesied from the personal characteristics of the judges.

If we were to turn to expositions of the Scriptures I think we should be obliged to feel that impartiality in careful exegesis by any man with a theory is not to be had. A man's theory will inevitably control his explanations of meaning. No matter how honest he is, no matter how determined his purpose is to be actually correct, it is not in human nature for him to abstain from making Scriptural passages conform to his general theories of doctrine. Let us admit this fact as one of the infelicities of human nature which should lead us to charity.

Knowing, however, that judgment is likely to be rendered according to the theories and characteristics of men, it is perfectly proper, and, in fact, a duty, to place in power men whose theories we believe to be correct. I should not wish to have placed upon the supreme bench a man who still believes in the right of secession, nor to have placed in the pulpit where I was to listen a man whose doctrinal views I believed to be contrary to the gospel of Christ.

A Country Church.

THE etymological meaning of words is not necessarily their present meaning. Pagans and country people are not synonymes.

I have vividly in mind a country church in New Hampshire. In fact, I attended service there as a worshipper Sunday before last. We drove two miles and a half, and the boys on their way gave us some beautiful pond lilies. The day was bright, the air was sweet, and one felt the calm repose which made the old New England Sunday so refreshing to the tired and so spiritual in its influence. The birds were singing sacred melodies, the trees were murmuring sacred chants, the rattle of the abashed mowing machine had ceased Saturday night. By the way, did it ever occur to you that the mowing machine is copied from the war-chariots with projecting scythes used by the ancients in battle? I sometimes wonder, when I see a machine in motion, how the driver would look if clad in ancient armor, according to the pictures.

The white chapel stands upon high but not hilly land near the centre of a farming town which contains near twenty square miles. The chapel was placed in an open pine grove, being, perhaps, eighty feet back from the highway. The society owns about fifty acres, but this land is not noted for fertility. It has a considerable number of horse sheds. Close by is the handsome parsonage. Much of the inside work of this parsonage was done by a former beloved pastor, who had been a very skilful wood carver in his younger life. When this minister, a few years ago, was about to read a paper before a general association in a costly church building upon the relation of the church to working men, he paused in front of the beautiful pulpit and said, "Brethren, I carved that pulpit twenty years ago." He did equally good work in the little country church of which I am writing. Within the chapel one finds no pews. Movable settees alone are used, and under the trust title no seats can ever be rented. There is perfect democracy in this regard. People sit where they please any Sunday. There is a large and excellent cabinet organ at the left of the minister. His desk stands on a plain platform, and is very simple. But there were beautiful flowers on the table before it. There are good looking chandeliers in the centre of the house and plenty of side lamps.

This property has been accumulated by hard work and much self-sacrifice during the present generation. The church was organized less than thirty years ago. I had an interest in the congregation that was gathering when I was leaving the seminary. This society has always been self-supporting, although strongly tempted sometimes to ask for help. The people work for their church's maintenance. They have a course of lectures every autumn, which brings in something and which is very useful to the town. The young people have a few festivals in the year. It is a purely farming community, and there are no startling incomes, although the people are by no means poor. That Sunday morning there were over two hundred and thirty persons present, including, perhaps, eight or ten visitors. The population of the town, which a few decades ago was about nine hundred, numbered only six hundred and six in 1890. In the remote corners we must deduct a few families who go to adjoining towns. Around the chapel there are a few homes, but scarcely

enough to make a hamlet. But the people keep fine horses, and they come to meeting. The large percentage of the whole population, old and young, sick and well, attending church that morning was noticeable. After service the people greet each other, and everybody knows who is sick and how the old folks are. They are all neighbors there. In the Sunday school there were one hundred and thirty-nine present. They call the roll in the Sunday school which, I think, has an excellent effect. At the Christian Endeavor meeting in the evening, which was led by a very bright young farmer, fifty-five were present. It amused me to see the older boys or younger young men coming up to the door on their bicycles. The evening was not very light, and the bright lamps, hung around among the trees, made the scene decidedly picturesque. I feel quite sure by the way of postscript, that the excellent music of the organ was brought out by that young farmer's wife. At the morning service the singing of the hymns, Gospel No. 5, was led by a choir of eight.

In this town, with its diminished population, there is no lawyer, no physician, no tavern. The nearest important railway station is four miles away from the chapel. The farms furnish good returns for work. But young men go away. A teacher told me that of the twelve boys, or young men, from sixteen to twenty-two years of age, who were in her class twenty years ago one only remains in that town. But this church with its simple, evangelical creed, is the centre of the social, literary, moral, and religious life of that town. It tends greatly to unite the people. Its influence for good, seldom reasoned about, is plainly perceptible to those who have watched it for thirty years.

The sermon, which I listened to with great comfort, was upon "the home." It was simple, earnest, direct, Christian, and well illustrated. The preacher, I may be pardoned if I say it, was not in his teens. He had had a rich experience in life, and I am particularly happy to say that he was not a "hustler." His method and spirit are the only ones which can make our country churches durable and useful. Country people know the distinction between good Scripture doctrine and progressive speculations, and the latter they do not want. Any substitute for sound gospel truth will kill any country church, and a church on any other basis than the truth is not worth keeping alive. The Endeavor meeting suggested to me the vast influence which this great society has in remote places through the principle of association. Where a young people's meeting would, in many cases, not be attempted, an Endeavor Society is strong by drawing a kind of life from the whole body. By the way, this particular society has just bought a pretty school-house, which the town decided to sell, has paid for it, and is soon to have it hauled to the chapel and made an additional room for services.

This country church has to struggle; but it is supported by indomitable pluck, by self sacrifice, by cheerful service, and simple, gospel methods. It has had gifts now and then from some generous friends outside who had local attachments. But the main reliance of the country church is, under God, within itself. No amount of missionary help can sustain the country church by pauperizing it. Indwelling life is its power.

Legal and Moral.

It is a common remark, as every one knows, "I have a right to manage my own business as I please." This remark is usually made with an air implying the impossibility of contradiction. But nothing can be more untrue. No man has a right to carry on his business as he pleases. He is limited by law as to the kind of business he may carry on. He is limited by law in many respects as to the methods he may use in a lawful business. A manufacturer, for instance, cannot employ child labor. He is restricted by regulations regarding dangerous machinery. His contracts are subject to legal control and his money transactions cannot override banking rules. He is even more dependent. He must have co-operation — it may be the co-operation of winds, or waters, or harvests, or it may be the co-operation of intelligent persons who have purposes of their own and force of will. When I was a boy the working men in the cotton mills — and especially in the iron and wood shops connected therewith — were always called "the hands." The natural implication that this meant a lack of intelligence was not true. "The hands" had brains.

But I suppose that the man who rashly asserts his right to manage his own business as he pleases will be willing to narrow his claim into the limits of legal rights. He means, perhaps, that he can manage any lawful business in any manner which law allows. But it does not follow that his business is consistent with the good of the community, and, if it is not, he has no right to carry it on. Nor, if his business be a reasonable one, has he any right to use methods or act upon principles which, although legal, are not according to the higher law of humanity. He has no right to take advantage of poor men's poverty. He has no right to trample upon the helpless. Neither the laws of business nor the law of the land can justify him in such a course.

I think that one sometimes is confused by not keeping two facts distinct. One may have no right to manage his business in a certain way which even the law allows, and yet no one has a right to interfere. The offender may safely say that no other person has a right to dictate by force, although there is a wrong which ought to be righted. There is a moral standard which is sadly forgotten, but who can enforce it? The legal right to be free in tyrannical methods does not make it right for a man to manage his business as he pleases. The law of God is above him. The law of Christ is binding on him. Throw both these aside, and the law of humanity is inexorable. "As he pleases" is no standard for true manhood.

There is always a standard higher than that which can possibly be put into statutes. The moral standard must always surpass the legal. The moral standard is one of principles, the legal is one of measures. I will defy any parent to make rules which a child cannot evade. But the parent can inculcate principles which will cover every conceivable application of what ought to be done. Perhaps some parents err by endeavoring to make rules, rather than to stimulate and instruct the conscience. While in the earlier training specific directions have to be given, the development of the child should gradually bring out the spirit of right action. This is not only because the highest good requires it, but also because, in the lower thought which I have just

reached, it is impossible to make laws sufficiently minute and sufficiently comprehensive to meet the need.

A legal standard can doubless be improved from time to time. Evils may be greatly diminished. Human rights may be better recognized. Humanitarian principles may be infused into laws. That all this should be done the good of society demands. But this requires that a high moral standard should be steadfastly affirmed as authoritative. There can safely be allowed no deference to any business habits, or conditions of society, as being in any way conclusive. Christian men certainly must maintain this position, and those who do not consider themselves as such will find that the standard of Christ in the relations of men is simply the highest moral standard possible and binding in such relations.

But there is a difficulty attending all legislation. The more sharp and accurate all assertions of rights may be the more is there often a corresponding loss of privileges. People content themselves with doing just what the legal obligation demands. Pauper laws have doubtless in many cases dried up the spirit of Christian charity; and yet there must be pauper laws, and yet no pauper laws can do what the principles of humanity demand. It is impossible to leave the protection of life in minds without legal restriction; but human greed, making these a standard, will do nothing beyond. The higher standard must therefore be inexorably insisted upon. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" cannot be framed into statutes. Human ingenuity can defy it. None the less should statutes try for it; and it should be asserted because of the difficulty none the less.

Opportunity often makes duty. I remember the remarks of a colonel in early war time, given in the course of instruction to his officers. He was an old Mexican War soldier, and had high ideas of soldierly honor. "Gentlemen," he said, "you will of course remember that at the close of a day's march it is your first business not to see that you have your quarters, but to see that your men have their quarters; not to see that you have your supper, but to see that your men have their supper."

I suppose I may be permitted to say that I cannot see how the principles of equal rights in our government can refuse to women the power of suffrage. I have voted for such suffrage in a legislative body, on the basis that no class in society has a right to deny the power of suffrage to another class. This is to me a self-evident proposition. But I am compelled to recognize the fact that with the establishment of such a right the position of woman would be at once generally relegated to a legal condition. I do not know that this would be an evil. If it were, it would be still a necessary incident to a right principle. One is compelled to see that coincident with every new legal power given to women by law, and with all discussion as to rights, there has come a rapid diminution of the courtesies once thought to be due to that sex. This is no reason for a reversal of the drift of legislation, but it does demand that the moral standard shall again be made prominent.

In fact, the moral standard must always be more powerful than the legal, unless we put the two terms together and speak of the law of love. Love, as a principle, makes law beyond what any legal right can demand. Love goes beyond justice. It makes the relation of the child more devoted and more help-

Legal and Moral.

ful than is found in any law of obedience. No wife would be contented with a legal support, however sufficient. No citizen, in whatever business he may be, can do his duty to humanity if he forgets the higher law. Certainly no Christian, although absolutely under the supremacy of the law of God, and always bound to keep it in view, can do the service which Christ requires unless he interprets the commandments into the spirit where Christ placed them, and which far transcends the commandments themselves.

The Religion of Hire.

MEETING once a family of comfortable working people in an English second-class railway-car — or at least the father, mother, and three children — I told the mother that I was inquisitive and wished to know if I could ask her questions about ways and cost of living. The good-natured Englishwoman smilingly consented to answer. The father was a signal man at a railway station at Newcastle, and a son was just about to enter the service of the same company. Two daughters, one of whom was in the car, were employed in mills. I said to the mother, when she had told me what the girls earned, "They must be able to lay up money after paying you for their board." "O," said she, "they are under age, and they bring me all their money, of course, and I clothe them." She seemed to be a very mother, and the children were very neatly attired; besides, they were going to spend a week at the seaside, particularly for the health of one of the young boys. Yet I think that this system of taking all the wages, which she said was the custom everywhere, was a little severe. She based it upon the duties of children in response to the earlier care.

Our home theology of a few generations ago made stalwart Christians. There is much in its abstruse philosophy, much in its terrible logic, much in its ungraceful outlines, which has never pleased me. But it had in it the sublime conception of what is called "disinterested benevolence," as the vital principle of godliness in human life. It meant the utter absence of attractiveness in personal profit by religion. It meant an all-powerful, all-controlling, throwing aside of self for whatever God deemed to be the highest good of men. It was a mighty thought, and it made mighty men and women. It must have been difficult in the experience of these men and women to have discriminated between motives. I have no doubt that some of them tortured themselves with their spiritual dissecting knives. But these people made churches, established colleges, created missions, and these things cost them the severest self-denial.

In the present humanitarian modes of work, in the systems which aim to win men by meeting physical wants, and in the methods which dress religion in the guise of amusements, there will be necessary an infusion of vigorous life very much like that to which I have alluded. What is absolutely right, and not what is profitable, is to be unhesitatingly exalted as the only standard. Some years ago I heard a sermon upon the proposition that a religious life

tends to make a man prosperous in worldly affairs. I did not quite enjoy the sermon. I admit a degree of truth in it, but the motive which it held out seemed to be dangerous. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," may be the path through which our Lord leads His beloved. Hard and stern duty may often stand in the way of accumulating property. I cannot throw away the argument that Christian integrity, Christian industry, and Christian purity tend to promote success in the work of life; but I do not dare to substitute this for the sublime motive of absolute right because it is right.

It is on this theory that I would educate children. They can understand very early in life what right means, even at the expense of self-indulgence. They can go further and be easily taught the privilege of service, which shall make their lives full. It is on this theory that I would have Christians made and nurtured. For what one gets, there will be poor service, and there will be a most uncertain continuance.

We cannot always draw sharp distinctions. In the second year of the great war there were men who on enlistment received a small bounty. This bounty system was not relished by the old soldiers, who had come out in the first impulse of devotion, and they used to call these recruits "the hired men." Such a name grated harshly on these men, who were, in the case I have in mind, unselfish and patriotic. In fact, the slight bounty was intended merely to meet the advance in costs at home. But the test was at hand which should decide the question of motives. There came a great battle, and these later soldiers proved themselves to be as brave and unflinching as any in the ranks. Among the wounded were some of the class who had fretted under the obnoxious title. One of them lifted his head and plaintively said, "You won't call us hired men any more, will you?" "No, we never will," was the hearty reply; and they never did.

But the other extreme seems to me still more objectionable. I refer to that in families where a child, who ought to assist a mother in little things in the household, does it only when paid for it at a regulate rate. It is sometimes called a way in which the child can earn money. But when the child is taught to earn money in payment for help which ought to be given as a matter of affection, as well as of duty, it is a mercenary method of destroying all the beauty of filial affection and robbing youth of its sweetest development. It is a premium upon selfishness. It robs the parent of delight in the natural and spontaneous assistance of the child, and it robs the child of the privilege of unbought love. The whole system, while it may be an easy way, is purely degrading on both sides. It exalts selfishness, and it tells the child that self-denial or unpurchased service for even a father or mother is folly.

The transition to religion is not difficult to make. The religion of hire is like the child service of hire. What shall I get for serving God? It is not quite in the strict line of thought — but I love to throw out flankers — how a distant relative of mine, a worthy minister of the same surname, who refused to accept a fixed salary, replied to my suggestion that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." "O, yes, but I do not hire out. If I did they ought to pay me the salary." He took only contributions privately given, and of which he never told. It is a remarkable fact, however, that under this system he laid up money every year. Really, I am sure, his life was a life of faith.

The Religion of Hire.

But Satan suggested the religion of hire in reference to Job. Satan's attention was called to Job's devout service to God. Satan replies by mentioning how prosperous Job was, and he significantly says, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" If Job's wealth should be taken away, what course would he then take? Then came the trial. I think a particularly impressive sentence is in the latter part of the book, where it is written, "The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when Job prayed for his friends." When unselfishly he forgot their offence against himself and pleaded for them with God, and forgot his own needs, his deliverance came.

Faithful.

An Irish girl in our house once said of something she had done, "Sure I did the best I could and the angels could do no more." I do not suppose that the sentence was original with her, but she had a right to appropriate it. It is good to think of the angels, and it lifts one out of low things when it is discovered that angelic and human service have a common standard. Some theological talk of divine perfection, angelic perfection, and Adamic perfection, if applied to work, is, of course, a mere play upon words. The angels can do no more than the best they can, and the child who does the same is so far the moral equal of the angels.

At a concert (so called) of a Sunday school a very small boy ran out upon the platform, made his little bow, spoke his little piece as rapidly as possible,

"I am a little mahn,
But I do the best I cahn,"

and ran off again. The people laughed, of course, but the sentiment was an inspiring one. I wonder if the boy, when he ceased to be a "little" man and went off to college, carried this rule with him into his life. One thing I know, that he worked steadily and patiently in a vacation whose story I heard. I have had occasion to be made acquainted with the persistent struggles of various young men in their well-nigh heroic efforts to obtain an education. The world seldom knows these histories. It is not neccessary that it should.

But struggling is not enough. Nor is it sufficient that single efforts now and then should be of high order. To be faithful denotes, I suppose, a character which can be trusted. The faithful person is uniformly true to duty. If he is set to do some work, he will do that work patiently, completely, and thoroughly. If he is placed on duty as a sentinel, he may be relied upon to be sleepless, watchful, and ready. If he is a patrolman, he is on his beat, vigilant and tireless, and no part is neglected. If he is a boy in a store, he loses no time, does his regular tasks heartily, promptly, and to the best of his ability. I have been told by employers that this kind of boy is hard to find. I should be sorry to think so. The faithful man or boy may need instruction, but he needs no watching. It is such people who are likely to succeed in the world. They certainly become the useful people in the world.

My mind has particularly turned to that feature in faithful work which may

be called completeness. I think that this is the one point liable to be neglected. It comes to me especially in thinking of education . I have heard it said of more than one teacher, "He does faithful work." That means that he omits no part of his work, however apparently unimportant, and that he does every part of his work thoroughly and well. Such a teacher, and only such a teacher, is faithful to his trust. There are many such teachers, men and women, conscientiously doing their work in this spirit of fidelity; but it is because they have governing them a higher law than the personal profit of their calling.

Reciprocally, the faithful student is one who does complete and thorough work in all particulars. He acknowledges every call made upon him by the course of study upon which he has entered. He does not regard it as at his option whether he shall or shall not attend to prescribed exercises or omit prescribed parts of study. I suppose that many students would think it hard to be called unfaithful, if so called on the ground of their indifference to prescribed work and their independence of rule and system, but they might well consider whether they are not in such a class. It is a fact that more than one half of all college students receive special aid in money from college or other funds. Such recipients are certainly under peculiar obligation to do their whole work and to do it well. If they do not, they are obtaining money under false pretences. The principle upon which such aid is given is the expectation that a thorough education is demanded, and not one weakened by a heavy per cent of neglect. Faithful students make faithful men. Never to allow a single task to be omitted, nor a single lesson to be slighted, is what should be urged upon every boy and girl in the lower schools by all parents, and the habit of faithfulness will continue in the higher stages of education, or in business life, as the future may determine. I do not know that there is any different principle in mechanical work. Thoroughness is the quality of good workmanship. But this implies an ideal. The little book, "Hiram Golf's Religion," beautifully illustrates this principle. The inscription upon his tombstone, "Shoemaker by the grace of God," is a volume in itself. It turns our thought to the fact that all work has in it a divine principle, not now that of usefulness, but that of the possibility of faithfulness. Faithfulness thus illustrated takes all work into the range of heavenly capacities and heavenly qualities. Here it finds the true dignity of labor. It shades by imperceptible degrees all service into Christian work and devotion.

Whatever duties may be found embodied in moneyed power, or in the industry which makes that power effective, area like under the law of faithfulness — faithfulness to the One who has committed both these abilities to His stewards. For there is a higher meaning in the word "faithful" than that of merely answering to a committed trust. It is true that there can be nothing more dishonorable or more debilitating than faithlessness to a trust. But the real life of "faithful" has its source in being full of faith. "Faithful Abraham," mentioned in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, was the Abraham who could be trusted; but he was "faithful," trustworthy, because he was first a man of faith. This is no play upon words. Search the Scriptures and you will find the several meanings. So a Christian is faithful in his Christian service, fit to be trusted by his Lord, reliable alike in all emergencies and in all the little

Faithful.

details of life, just in proportion to the strength and fulness of his faith in his Redeemer and Lord. With fulness of faith he is no eye-servant nor one who shirks his duty.

We began with the thought of the angels. Who was the builder — I do not remember, but some reader will — who made the beautiful reply to persons saying that the delicate carvings with which he insisted upon finishing the spire hundreds of feet from the ground would never be seen by any man? "No," he answered, "but the angels will see."

"And For His Better Encouredge= ment."

THESE words were quite frequent in the votes of towns calling ministers to settle as pastors and teachers two hundred years ago. At least it was the phraseology in New Hampshire. The vote first extended the call, and then a paragraph began, "And for his better encouredgement," which "encouredgement" consisted in pledging to the pastor elect, in addition to the use of the parsonage and parsonage lands, a certain annual stipend and a stated number (occasionally forty) of cords of wood. Sometimes the stipend, which was a tax lawfully assessed upon the people, was payable, in part, at least, in provisions. Thus in one of the New Hampshire towns, in 1659, the "provision rate" specified beef at three pence per pound, pork at four pence, wheat at five shillings per bushel, peas at four shillings, malt at six shillings, barley at five shillings and six pence, butter at six pence per pound, and cheese at "prise corant."

It was, no doubt, a great encouragement to the minister when he began his work in those days to know that he was settled for life, so that he could not be disturbed by any troublesome parishioner, and that he was sure of adequate subsistence. He was thus left free from anxiety as to temporal support, and was sure of sustenance in old age. The expression which I have quoted is rather a queer one, but the substance of what followed certainly gave to the minister much encouragement to devote himself to his spiritual service. A man harassed by cares loses heart. The way to encourage him is to relieve him of some of these anxieties. An ancestor of mine, who was a godly preacher, and who went about doing great good, refused a fixed salary. He lived by faith and he was surprisingly well taken care of. But my father used to say that the Lord took much better care of the elder's farm, after my grandfather, a well-to-do farmer in the neighborhood. married the elder's daughter, and used to come over and cut the grass which the elder had left standing while away on a preaching tour. Faith is indispensable, but it does not make hay.

If, however, I were intending to discuss the "better encouredgement" which a minister must have, I should find it in a higher plane. It would be in the expressed appreciation of his work by good Christian people; in the faithful co-operation of helpers; in the affectionate regard given by the aged and the children; in the visible results with which God blesses his ministry. To make the minister feel some of these things, where now there is often reserve, would

give new courage to many a depressed worker. And yet he has the still higher encouragement of the approval of the Master Himself

But this is not the main direction of my thought to-day. I write on the last day of the old year. I wonder what will be the record of next year's work in the life of persons who pass before my mind. I see one thing which many of them will need. It is encouragement. Some people are self-reliant, energetic, and fearless. Perhaps such persons have these qualities in youth, rather than in mature years. But most people will be helped by being encouraged. The little child whose mother gently stands him in the corner of the room and then sits down upon the floor a little off from him, and holds out her hands laughingly and tells him he can walk to her, gets bold by this encouragement. Do not laugh at this illustration. We are not at all happier because we have lost our childhood's faith that heaven was only just above the tree-tops.

A very little encouragement held out to a boy or girl will often secure great results. Every good schoolteacher understands and applies this truth. At least, he applies it if he is where he can touch individuals, unfettered by the remorseless machinery of some school systems. A boy may fall behind and easily get discouraged. He does not feel that he can accomplish anything. He needs the stimulus of hope. Convince such a one, by warm words and assertion of faith, that success is in his power, and he does succeed. Encouragement does infinitely more than censure. A discouraged rosebud may blossom if you place it in the sunshine.

Perhaps the encouragement may be given by example. In Walter Scott's brilliant "Anne of Geierstein," which, I think, has been underestimated because compared with "Ivanhoe," the maiden gave boldness of step to the young man who looked with dismay at the fallen tree which was his only bridge across a fearful chasm, in whose far-down depths was a roaring torrent. She did it by herself tripping across and back.

I doubt not there are many cases where a little assistance given to a young business man, or some forbearance shown to him at a critical time by some man of ability, would be the turning point in the young man's future. It might give him success in business, secure him an honorable life, and give him and his a happy home. The little encouragement, with its evidence of confidence, would be the turning point. I believe that there are many such cases of kind helpfulness. While some men take the ground that everybody must be left to fight his own way through all obstacles — perhaps from selfishness, perhaps from a real belief that it is the best method of development — it is not Christian; it is not even human.

This paper would be useless, however, if it did not suggest that some encouragement to a better life may be all that is sometimes needed to insure that better life. The possibility of reform is sometimes what is needed to make that reform sure. "I cannot," are the words of hopelessness. "You can," are the words of inspiration. When old theologies insisted on the utter helplessness of sinful men to repent, their sternness always softened away into the omnipotence of the divine grace which could breathe all power into the will of the helpless. "You cannot," they said, but they added the gospel of grace which said, "You can."

Grasshopper Religion.

THE word "grasshopper" suggests July rather than January, and hay fields rather than snows, and therefore the title above may strike one as out of season. But it should be noted that while hay work is necessarily in summer, and mental or religious work is apt to be in winter, the grasshopper activity may be remarkably similar in the two. The grasshopper is decidedly versatile, never remains long on one stalk, and hops from one to another with great agility. His movements are always accompanied also by a kind of shrill buzz, which, although monotonous is doubtless the grasshopper's self-contented assertion of progressiveness.

A man whom I had reason to reverence in my boyhood was so regular in attending his own church that he was doubtless considered to be narrow. If he was absent the pastor inferred that he must be ill. I know that he was occasionally urged to go somewhere else and hear some new thing which was to be said, or some new minister who was to speak, but he calmly and kindly kept on his way. He was an intelligent and devout Christian and had settled convictions. He heard the truth preached in his own place of worship, and he had his own minister to help by his presence. He was not in search of novelty, being satisfied that true progress consisted in growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He came to be one of the pillars in the house of God. His life was serene, his old age happy, and his memory honored.

I confess that I have come more and more to like that kind of steadiness. The outward regularity implies settled inward convictions and principles. Such steadiness suggests depth of thought rather than superficial assumptions. A rooted tree is not a grasshopper.

Of an opposite kind, I remember a professed Christian down by Buzzard's Bay who used to go about from church to church Sunday by Sunday, and who exercised his gifts of utterance successively in the different prayer meetings. He did it, I believe it was said, to show his unsectarianism. Besides, he got good everywhere, obtaining the choicest excellences of each church. It enabled him to select the rarest bits from the various bills of fare, which he could traverse with grasshopper agility. But I think I never heard that he was relied upon anywhere for pecuniary help toward church expenses.

Still another was one who roamed the pastures Sunday afternoons and with a little hammer, which he, being a stone mason, providentially had with him, chipped the rocks which he found in his wanderings. He united thrift with godly meditation. At the Sunday evening prayer meetings he was active and always started the singing of a hymn of which he was fond: —

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it."

Possibly the variety of methods for useful work which are particularly prominent just now may afford a safer outlet for the active spirit, mingled with the love of novelty, to which I am referring. Some well-meaning man is full of life. He must be constantly busy. It is essential that there be an overflowing of his exuberant impulses. It is fortunate that he can take to some one

department and keep to it while its novelty remains. Then he can skip to another, and then to another. In some one department he can invent varieties, say in the exercises of some society, and he can thus secure great freshness. Possibly a pastor may have the same gift. He invents new methods of church work. He has great power in organizing. He has a new committee. It is not always certain, however, that his schemes have in them the life which would make them a necessity. Occasionally it has been found that the pastor himself lost interest in them in a few weeks and enthusiastically invented some more. There is nothing like being busy.

After all, there is something vastly more important than these outside things. There is no religion without beliefs. How are these beliefs to be acquired? Perhaps I may change this to say how will they be acquired? Perhaps they will have depth, perhaps they will not. Perhaps they will be settled, perhaps they will be changeable. Really there was pathos in the lately reported humorous saying of Holmes, "We wake up in the morning and ask ourselves, What do we believe to-day?" The grasshopper system is necessarily superficial, but the superficial is not always necessarily of the grasshopper kind. One may be permanently superficial. I know nothing that can foster this more successfully in the matter of knowledge than some periodical clubs which I have seen. One number of a periodical will contain labored articles on science, history, politics, art, and each member is allowed one week in which to master the whole. There is not a subject in it which ought not to have weeks of study, direct or collateral, if one is to obtain anything more than a smattering by which he can glibly repeat a few names or words. This necessitates the superficial.

The grasshopper kind is different, because while being superficial, it leaps from one thing to another. Now in religion here is a method which I can warmly advise for those who like it, and who have the celerity for it. One should try orthodoxy for a while. But being broad-minded and liberal, and being desirous of new thoughts and fresh deliverances, he should next try temporarily the ministrations of the most extreme radical and revel in his freedom. By and by he should devote himself with sudden reaction to the delightful sermons of Phillips Brooks, and should know nothing else. Eventually tiring of these, he rejoices in a course of lectures by Rabbi Somebody, in whom he finds a new revelation. In due time he should hop to the Oriental Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, and sit at his feet with a certainty that the Asiatic mind has the profound universal religion. Each of these in turn is to be supreme for the moment. Each is to be forgotten with each successive hop. The whole system is profound, learned, wise. It has the great advantage of not requiring any foundation for any opinion. It is easy. It is like the old pamphlets — "The French language without a master in six lessons." It has also the warrant of some philosophical minds, who jump from one foreign philosophy to another because a new professor has got out a new introspection.

I think, on the whole, that we all prefer to have people positive. If one is an open Unitarian, we respect him as such and acknowledge his honesty of purpose. So with a Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, or any other in the religious field. A real and genuine Hindu is worth something.

Speaking of grasshoppers, I am reminded that the New Hampshire Legis-

Grasshopper Religion.

lature, about a dozen years ago, offered a bounty for the collection of these insects. If I remember correctly, it was finally decided that grasshoppers were worth a dollar a bushel.

Except They Be Agreed.

Not long ago a singer in church gave as a voluntary "Jesus, lover of my soul." After service the pastor privately requested her not to repeat this hymn, at least in that form, because it was not in harmony with his preaching. He was undoubtedly right in his theory that the hymns and the preaching should be in unison. He was therefore right in his request that this dissonance should not again occur.

But close to the time when this incident was told me there was also a discussion as to the illiberality of Young Men's Christian Associations in not inviting to membership those not members of evangelical churches. I think that a just criticism would lie against inviting non-evangelical persons to an associate membership wherein they would pay taxes but not vote, or even against asking contributions from members of any denomination excluded from full membership. Such a course seems to me to be discourteous in the extreme. While this principle would not exclude from certain privileges any persons who knowingly applied for them, it would forbid inviting any one to a kind of inferiority.

But the occurrence which I first mentioned illustrates the nature of the second. The pastor and the singer could not agree upon "Jesus, lover of my soul." What harmony would be possible in an association for Christian practical work where a great portion of its members will be constantly singing that hymn? That hymn signifies a whole system of religious experience, and necessitates a whole method of Christian work. The purposed exclusion of that hymn implies a widely different religious experience and a totally different method of doing good. The pastor felt the irreconcilable disagreement. What concord could there be, in direct Christian effort, between two systems so significantly diverse? The difficulty is not one to be removed by the spread of a liberal spirit; it is a practical question of the possibility of harmonious work. It would be neither right nor courteous to sing "Jesus, lover of my soul," in the meetings of an association where some of its members were received upon the full understanding that they did not believe in the sentiment of this hymn. If we add to this one the multitude of other hymns constantly sung in such meetings, whose fervor is possible only because they place salvation from sin in the blood of Jesus the divine Lord, it is at once evident that unity would be impossible. I am reminded, just here, of an incident in the mountains some years ago, when, on a Sunday evening, the singing of religious hymns was concluded by the Doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Some persons not only refused to rise and join, but later expressed their indignation that another Doxology, which did not have the line, "Father, Son and Holy Ghost," had not been chosen. Possibly, courtesy in such a gathering might

have omitted anything offensive, although the selection was thoughtless. But in permanent organizations for Christian work it would be difficult to keep all tongues in such subjection that they should never allude to the divinity of Christ or the work of the Holy Spirit. But it would only be at this price that harmony could be had. Such, therefore, is the practical difficulty which seems to make the separation of excellent people spontaneous, and not resulting from personal dislike or want of respect on either side.

To say that one object is common to both classes, and that they differ only as to methods, or perhaps only in opinions which have no practical bearing, will undoubtedly apply in the case of organizations of certain kinds. Purely charitable societies may be of this kind. I remember, however, that in the time of my boyhood the old anti-slavery agitators, who had a common end, early split into two associations. It is certainly impossible to apply the principle of a common end in religious work until we define that common end. If that end or object be the salvation of men through the redemption there is in Jesus and regeneration by the Holy Ghost, or if its whole practical work in what may be called affiliated effort to do good is based upon these principles, it will be seen that the common end cannot mean anything less. To help humanity is too vague a term for our purpose. To help humanity by faith in Jesus Christ is a specific necessity. It is also plain that while a variety of methods is always desirable, that variety must be in absolute connection with the great central truth. Otherwise, a variety of methods would be contradictory and hurtful. On the whole, I do not see how practical unity could be secured by striking out "Jesus, lover of my soul."

I will suppose a case of a city mission. It has been established for the preaching of the gospel as its predominant object, and with this for judicious help to the poor. Its hymns are gospel hymns. Its teachings to the gathered children are purely Scriptural on the evangelical basis. The institution has an open character and work. The time may come, however, when need of money or a growing sense of liberality may lead to broadening the mission by inviting into its management persons who reject what are commonly known as evangelical opinions. But one result is then possible. Ordinary fairness requires that the whole tone of instruction and work be brought down to the level of those who have been invited to take part in the control and to furnish moneys for its support. Such persons may be generous enough not to ask this, but justice is justice, and whether demanded or not the lower level will be reached. That is, peace can be permanent only by eliminating the old doctrines.

Among the significant things of to-day is the great pastoral letter of the bishops of the Episcopal Church. As a specimen of superb English it is a model. As a clear, sharply defined, and bold statement of true Christian doctrine it has an unmistakable ring, for which we ought to be thankful. Most of us will not agree with its apparently extreme view of Episcopal Church authority in matters of doctrine. We distinguish between the Church of Christ and the episcopate. But there is great force in any argument that the consensus of the whole Christian Church on matters of fundamental doctrine expresses the will of the Holy Spirit. It seems to me that Professor Briggs and the bishops show a wonderful similarity of opinion as to the church's place in the sources of truth. But leaving this aside and not pausing to criticise some of

Except They Be Agreed.

the expressions as to the Scriptures, I think we should hail this great exposition of the doctrine of the incarnation the absolute authority of the Scriptures, and the supernatural source of redemption as of vast importance in asserting the faith of the Christian Church. My immediate object, however, in connection with this document is based upon assertions that it will prevent entrance into that church of persons who feel that they may believe whatever they please, provided they submit to certain forms. If it has this effect the Episcopal Church can rejoice. It will be far stronger without such help than with it.

Compromise.

WHAT the nature of compromise is, and when compromise is proper, is a matter of opinion. One person thinks that compromise is always wrong, and another thinks that it is usually wise. My own view is that as applied to principle it is always wrong, while as applied to measures under admitted principles it is usually wise. That is where I make the distinction.

Compromise is generally understood to mean meeting half way, and this is perhaps correct. It is a very easy method. I knew a New Hampshire judge, a most excellent man, who in business cases was apt to rule about midway between the parties. A disappointed man once said to a neighbor: "Do you want to get a five thousand dollar farm? If you do, lay claim to some ten-thousand dollar one, and bring the suit before Judge ——. The judge will give you half!" Compromise is not always equity, but it saves much labor. A right cannot be divided into two pieces.

For instance, a person is guilty of a particular offence, or he is not guilty. There is no possibility of dividing the point at issue. A verdict must be one way or the other. About 1643, a woman was acquitted at Exeter from the charge of being a witch, but it was added that inasmuch as she was under strong suspicion she was to wear a ball and chain for some months. Modern law is more exact and allows no compromise on the fact of guilt.

It is a very common saying, when sharp divisions occur, "There is wrong, of course, on both sides," and there is a tendency to avoid search for the real right and wrong on this plausible evasion. I have seen church difficulties to a considerable extent, and have been upon some councils. The evasion which I have just specified is often attempted. I have never consented to what this intends. There was an original wrong somewhere. That first wrong was on one side, and that first wrong must be found and rectified. No amount of subsequent wrong-doings on either side must obscure the rightful demand that that first evil be repaired. Christian and Hopeful could not take a short, diagonal cut into the right path; they had to go back to the very spot from which they had wickedly wandered. A general weighing of two bundles of wrong words and doings, with a view to balancing, is not the way to settle difficulties.

At the same time, it is sometimes proper and wise to avoid a decision in an obscure case where the evils can be remedied without it. For instance, a church was once rent into two pieces which held public worship separately.

Each piece claimed to be the church. Each piece dated from a church meeting, called in one of the methods which the vague church rules allowed. Each had a genuine book of records which had been in use. After a fierce feud, both parties, perhaps rather tired, yielded to strong pressure and agreed to a mutual council. The question now raised was how to get these two pieces together. A plan was suggested and formulated. A call was to be issued for a meeting of *the* evangelical church in ——, to be signed by each person purporting to be clerk. At this meeting a member of the council, selected by the council, was to preside; and if the votes of the two pieces were satisfactory, the two clerks should resign, and *a* clerk be chosen. Then all the deacons on the two sides and the superintendents of the two Sunday schools should resign, and new deacons and one superintendent be chosen. The council made this action conditioned (1) on acceptance by each party, and (2) on declaration by each that all records of either as to the reception or dismissal of members be valid in the one body, and all the ugly votes on either side be rescinded and destroyed.

Presiding at that meeting was a very delicate operation, and it required one adjournment because one party did not at first, although accepting the advice of council, secure the rescinding of obnoxious votes in the society. The moderator had the advantage of a vote of the council that, if either party did not fairly carry out the plan, he should make public that fact and advise the churches, in the name of the council, that the well-behaved portion ought to be fellowshipped and the obstinate one be ignored. The moderator was greatly encouraged when at the meeting thus called, he heard one of the women say, after an opening hymn had been sung, "Well, we women have got together again, and they won't get us separated any more!" Success was secured. Reunion would have been impossible on any other basis, than that of ignoring the question as to which was the church in a technical sense, a question which, in fact, would have puzzled any court. That church is now a strong church, and, perhaps, has forgotten the trouble which rent it and which was healed more than thirty years ago. That moderator was happy when, after the election of a single clerk, he required all the books to be deposited upon the table, and then delivered them into the hands of that clerk, saying, "You are the clerk of —— church in ——, and these records I place in your hands as such."

There was no moral question really at issue in this case. If there had been such, this kind of compromise would have been impossible. Balancing between good and evil in the end accomplishes nothing. I will suppose that the bullion of a silver dollar is worth but fifty cents in standard coin. It is asserted that the free coinage of such money, and the making it a legal tender for all debts, would be dishonest. But suppose that a compromise is effected by which seventy-five cents' worth of bullion is coined into a nominal dollar. I cannot see how the clumsy article can satisfy those who object to any coin of less value than the full standard. If the present dollar, freely coined, would be dishonest, then the one which I have supposed would be just half as dishonest, and one cannot see how dishonesty is susceptible of division. I take this merely as an illustration, and not as expressive of views on the silver question.

There was a great compromise once known as the "Missouri Compromise," that of 1820. It divided the Western county between freedom and slavery. I

Compromise.

was hardly of age when the county was shaken by the efforts to repeal that compromise and give the whole to slavery. The country deserved this period of agony. Slavery was absolutely criminal. In consenting to a compromise, the North consented to wrong, and deserved the bad faith which it met. We all remember, how that conflict went on until war rent the land, and no more compromises became possible. Neither truth nor principle admit of compromise. A noted citizen of Massachusetts said: "I always favored compromise with the slave power. So did others, and it encouraged that power. But in time it cost me the life of my only son."

The Sarsaparillas.

I RECALL a great war in the weekly papers of my early life between two preparations of sarsaparilla. It was when I was learning to set type in a newspaper and job office, and the fierce advertisements impressed themselves upon my memory. By the way, reading proof is the best method of learning how to spell. One sees the word and will always know when it looks right.

The two kinds of sarsaparilla were those of Dr. Jacob Townsend and Dr. Samuel P. Townsend. Dr. Jacob was the old doctor; Dr. Samuel P. was the young doctor. The advertising war was furious. Jacob was an old family doctor, they said. He had had the experience of many years and had put into his medicine the results of a life-time. He disdained the rashness of speculative youth. Samuel P. was not hide-bound. He had the brilliancy of modern invention, the treasures of science, the freshness of young life. Each extolled the almost supernatural virtues of sarsaparilla, but each denounced the other as dangerous. Each warned the community against being deceived. The only genuine sarsaparilla was the one bearing the inventor's name, and each had abundant testimonials of the efficacy of his compound.

Sometime afterward, when my studies led me into more important fields, the recollection of the medicine war suddenly came to my mind as of something remarkably similar to certain great quarrels in speculative thought. By no means would I deny the value of controversy or of its results. But when we look back through pamphlets and volumes upon the fightings of our fathers, I think the parallel which I have summoned is evident. Who knows about the contest between the taste scheme and the exercise scheme? Who, except a few theologians or antiquarians, know what these words mean? Yet in their day, perhaps seventy years ago, they distracted the pulpits of New England. Each insisted that it was the only genuine article. For myself, I must solemnly aver that the taste scheme, as I read the old documents, was the only genuine preparation. It is true, I suppose, that the other scheme worked as well as its opponent. Each, doubtless, had its own value, and whether it was according to the formula of the old doctor or the young doctor does not seem to have vitally affected the churches..

Perhaps I may venture to allude to another great controversy which I think had rather spent its force just before my time in the seminary. I fear I shall

awaken some echoes of the old battle if I mention two names, but it will be only in the minds of old soldiers nearing heaven. It was a great controversy. It established a new theological seminary. They used to call one side "old school" and the other "new school." It is a noticeable fact that writers of the present day, especially in secular papers which undertake to treat of religious matters, are bewildered into error by these terms, calling certain people "old school" who are really the "new school" men of not many years ago. I have again to admit my belief that the "old school" had the better argument. I am not sure but that I thought that old Dr. Jacob, on the whole, made the best preparation of sarsaparilla, although I could not deny that young Dr. Samuel P. presented admirable testimonials. It is said that one young man, of the then extreme New Haven type, was accepted as a missionary of the American Board by a majority of only one in the committee. When he returned after some years of work, and was asked about the views for which he had contended so fiercely, he answered, "I declare, I never thought of them after leaving the wharf." Good, solid work is the best way to cure great speculations. I think that when one enters heartily into preaching the gospel, a little nonsense, however profound he thought it when he came out of theoretical discussions, will speedily be pounded out of him.

I am supposing all this time that the real truth is held, although in different forms. Those forms men will fight for with all the intensity of a conviction that the particular form is a necessity. Men will indeed separate, one from another, because of these diversities. They will waste time and ammunition in fighting each other. Perhaps it is a necessity. Perhaps truth comes out clearer because of it. But it is instructive to see how the very controversies of so few years ago are so absolutely forgotten that people now do not recognize even their names. The inquisitive man must go to the Congregational Library to inform himself as to what I am writing about. The say that the Patent Office at Washington is immensely valuable for showing an ardent inventor what has been designed in precisely his own line and has proved useless. The same value may attach to much in our library, although the law of evolution has brought much that is real out of these old controversies.

I doubt if a single reader has now in memory the names of Dr. Jacob and Dr. Samuel P., names which perhaps my newspaper experience fixed in my mind. It will do no harm to remember that every few years has a new crop of advertising names which, however skilfully paraded, will speedily pass away. Perhaps it is a more important question whether the two sarsaparillas had any sarsaparilla in them. It is not certain that what sarsaparilla may have been employed in the early stages of the contest did not disappear in the course of the controversy, as the truth may disappear through contentions about its forms. It has been strongly hinted that whatever was curative in some such preparation was really the work of an alterative drug whose name was not used. It has also been said that a guileless old farmer, who once took to the manufactory a large supply of the nominal root, was surprised to be informed that they did not use the article. Possibly some "schemes" are as destitute of real substance, and will therefore pass into oblivion because useless. If the "schemes" have life they will live, but their form is not life.

Different times show more extensive changes. Sarsaparilla was asserted to

The Sarsaparillas.

be the mighty curative of mankind fifty years ago. But I have been informed that much which claims to be sarsaparilla is only sassafras. In fact, back in 1603, sassafras was the potent factor of life. When Matthew Pring in that year ascended what we believe is the Piscataqua, the adventurous voyager recorded his extreme disappointment in these words: "We saw also, sundry sorts of beasts, as stags, deere, beares, wolves, foxes, lusernes, and dogges with sharp noses. But meeting with no sassafras, we left these places."

If there is not even sassafras in men's controversies, we are indeed unfortunate.

Giving Advice.

In general, people do not ask advice because they want it, but because they wish to be sustained in their own opinion. If the advice which you give does not coincide with that opinion, they are offended. Indeed, they do not scruple, under the thin guise of asking advice, to tell what they think ought to be done, and then ask if you do not think they are right. Hence, giving advice is seldom of any use.

I gave my opinion to a minister who asked for it some years ago, but it did not agree with his wish, and he got advice from half a dozen others, who simply gratified his own notions. He took his own course, and the result was sad disaster. He really had not asked any of us for advice. His request was a pretence. He wished support for his own stubbornness. It is wise to ask, if you are applied to, "Do you really wish for advice as to your best course, or have you made up your mind already?" It is not worth while to waste time.

The tendency to gratify the questioner is often complicated by a lack of complete appreciation of the situation. People who ask advice will seldom give a fair statement of the case. This is particularly true in church difficulties. It is never safe to take the representation of one side for its face value. There are always two sides. You need the facts of both sides. If you are wise you will not give advice without specifiying precisely the representations made to you. It is never safe to say, "You are right in your judgment, and should act accordingly." No. You should say, "Your statement is as follows," etc. "Upon *this showing*, then," etc. If you do not care to copy the statement made by the applicant, then, if possible, write on the back side of the applicant's letter and refer specifically to the other side for information. The chances even then will be that you will be misinterpreted.

Still, this method furnishes some safeguard. There is need of it. I have known very serious harm done by giving a general approval to a particular course without specifying what that course had been represented to be. Then, again, sympathy may warp the adviser's mind. Perhaps he thinks well of the party applying to him. He hears a roseate statement from some person who has, for the time being, a remarkably pious tone. An impulsive man may immediately give his warm approval. I recall such a case which occurred thirty years ago. A deacon came to me, I know not why, but he came to me

with a statement and desired my view of the matter. I told him that, on his own representation, the society was in a wrong course, and I advised that it recede. The deacon was greatly offended. He said: "Why, only two days ago Rev. Dr. —— told me that the Lord was on our side and we ought to go right ahead. Do you think that you know more than Dr. ——?" I answered that I had no information from the Lord in this matter, but that I knew that the Supreme Court of Massachusetts would be on the other side. The headstrong deacon persisted, and the result was very expensive.

I think, however, that we may well distinguish between giving advice and giving information. What most persons really need is generally the latter and not the former. They need knowledge upon the subject under discussion. With that knowledge furnished they are in a good condition to decide what to do. Such is often the case when there is no controversy. It does not mean that they are to be influenced, but simply that they need to know. "Advice" is a general term, indeed, covering in common usage this feature. A person gets advice from a lawyer, when all that the word means is what the legal course would be, and not an urging or persuading the applicant to take that course. It is a familiar story, that of a man who said to a physician in the street, "Doctor, if such and such were symptoms, what should one take?" "Take advice," said the doctor, who knew the character of the questioner. I have myself repeatedly given advice of the soundest kind in some ecclesiastical affair, namely, "Go to a good lawyer." Of course, the cases thus under consideration concerned property or some legal organizations, and not disagreements between brethren.

It is often rash for any person to give advice, even when it is asked for. By "advice" I now mean any attempt to influence or persuade. It is often assuming too much responsibility. It is best to stop with giving information. If one finds that a proposed course upon which an opinion is asked is clearly dangerous, it is a duty to warn against that course. But in cases of simple doubt every one will shrink from attempting to decide for another. If one asks me, for instance, what physician he would better employ, I certainly should never advise him. All that I should dare to say would be to tell him who my own physician is and that I had entire confidence in his skill so far as exhibited in my own case and that of my family. So much is due to my physician.

But I should not dare urge my friend to employ him. Should I do so and he should follow my advice, and there should be some sad occurrence in his family which no physician could prevent, my friend would be a better balanced man than most men are if he did not feel a little hard toward me. Perhaps I ought not to be afraid of such a result, but I think that the information I had given him would be all that was warranted on my part.

Much less is one justified in giving advice without being asked. It is often impertinent. It assumes superior wisdom. No one is authorized, except in cases of danger, to interfere in other people's affairs. It is also assuming an improper responsibility. One cannot decide for another. Self-decision is essential to true development. The power to decide upon rational grounds should be left to its natural course. I am not saying that a person who has had many years of experience may not kindly help the judgment of some young man who confides in him; he ought to do it. But what he will do is

Giving Advice.

rather to inform the understanding, present a broad range of facts, and suggest general principals rather than advise specific action at the time. An urgency which really decides for the person is not to be commended.

The best adviser a young man can have is his father. The best adviser a girl can have is her mother. Happy is the home where there is perfect confidence between these persons. Yet even the parents will often wisely, but watchfully, lead the children to self-decision.

Filberts.

I WAS a decidedly small boy when this happened. I had a few cents to spend and, being eager to share with the boy who was my next neighbor and usual intimate, I said, "What shall we buy?" "Filberts," he promptly said. So we bought filberts and took them home and made ready to crack. "Let me see," said my friend, "whether they are sound. Filberts that rattle are not good." So he took them into his possession and threw away all that rattled, which left us about one quarter of the original purchase. The apparently bad ones went over the fence into his own yard.

Not long afterward I discovered that rattling filberts were good. But it was quite a while before I chanced to suspect that my playmate, who was a year older than myself, knew that fact. My painful suspicions were increased when it came to my mind that all the rattling filberts had gone over the fence into his premises. Could it be that he had afterwards picked up the nuts for his own enjoyment?

Perhaps this was the first occasion on which I was led into distrust. I remember nothing earlier in that direction. I regret to say that I have thought of filberts a good many times since. It is often a serious question whether the ostensible reason advanced for some particular course is the real reason. An experienced legislator once told me that the apparent object of some proposed measure rarely disclosed the real object. In fact, he declared that most bills had their rise in some private object which was kept out of sight. This man had had both State and national experience and had served his country bravely in the field. Perhaps he was justified so far as this, that some private experience suggested the need of some remedy which might be of more general application. A disclosure, however, of the original object might have excited opposition. Perhaps, sometimes, there were filberts in the case. I have sometimes thought that the warm advocacy of measures by some politicians meant filberts.

How far to distrust people, or how far to consider what may be their object, is a very difficult thing about which to establish a rule. What is one aiming at? What is his object? I know what he says and it sounds plausible, but what is he saying it for? Has he some advantage to gain which does not appear in the proposal, but which is its real basis? Frequently I read editorials which, from experience of their kindred, I know perfectly well, open with apparently candid and reasonable statements which are far off from the real point intended to be assumed at the end. There are men who make it their rule, they say, to

meet every man with a felt possibility that the man is a rogue. Watch every man, they say, as if the man might be trying to cheat you. They declare this to be the only safe method. It must have been a sad experience which has led any man to such an unhappy conviction. It is well enough to bear in mind that one whom you must meet may have projects which he does not reveal. It is proper to ask, in one's own thought, what the projector wants. It would have been proper for me to have ascertained whether rattling filberts were really bad. It would not have been wicked in me to have wondered why all the filberts which he declared to be unsound were thrown over into his domain. I suppose that business men cannot act upon the ingenuous innocence of my early boyhood.

But while, as it is seen, I have never forgotten the nuts, and while I was greatly distressed when suspicion crept into my guileless soul, the subsequent years have not made me feel that that transaction is the rule of human nature. I believe the contrary. I have found friends who were disinterested, or unselfishly interested rather, in their intercourse with me and mine. Most of those with whom I have been brought in close contact have proved themselves frank, honest, kind-hearted.

A presumption that one is to meet with deception will certainly tend to secure it. It will throw one out of connection with honorable people by breaking the subtle nerve between the two; and it will throw one into connection with the untrustworthy who feel the equally sensitive nerve which repels while it unites. Like finds like. Trust a man and you give him a reason for justifying your trust. Trust a child. Do not suspect the child of wrong-doing. Do not suggest to the child that you are doubting him. If you make him feel that you think he is deceiving you, you break the strongest reason he has for not deceiving you. If he perceives that you lack faith in him, you have lost your hold on him.

I knew a father who had no great means but who sent his son to college. He advised the son to keep an account of his expenses, told him the necessity of economy, and then said to him: "I shall never look at your account of your expenses. I do not wish to know what you do with the money." I think that that father was right. More than thirty years ago, I was one of an examining committee of the old college. Two of us were one afternoon delegated to the examination of a class section in Greek. The professor, in view of experience with another section, said to us that he wished we would warn this section against the use of books. I was asked to give the warning and the expected threat. My statement was this: "Gentlemen, you are aware that the use of translations in examinations is contrary to propriety. The committee, however, will make no attempt to prevent it. We shall trust your honor, and will never after allow the question to be raised." My colleague was surprised, but the trust was substantially justified. In fact, boys whom you cannot trust, you cannot control.

I would not consider my filbert experience to be a good model. But I would rather take it as a model than to live a life of constant suspicion and distrust of my fellowmen. Indeed, even that early extreme would bring better results. I do pity some men who have been so deceived that they have lost their faith in humanity.

Filberts.

Especially will I suggest to your ministers that they trust their people, in the full expectation that they will find kindness and support. People who are trusted will repay the confidence.

Ravens.

WHAT ministers are to do and how they are to be fed after passing the equinoctial line is the question. It has been generally thought that the age of fifty marked the transition, but an editorial in a secular daily recently expressed the opinion that forty was the present line. A friend of mine, a little past fifty, lately told me that he had failed to receive calls to two churches by reason of the opposition of the young people in their now somewhat compacted position as a distinct body. This minister is an excellent preacher and pastor and has ample success, but the young people demanded youth. Another minister lately told me, with much pain, that he had had three such experiences. Some men have such ability that they can hold the positions which they occupy, but the greater number cannot.

My thought just now is, perhaps, a worldly one. Apart from the sad fact of loss of opportunity for service, what are men to live upon? As they grow still older, what then? The answer is ready. The ravens will attend to it. The ravens fed Elijah. But perhaps the brook will dry up. Will Sarepta always be available? I think we may take a glance at methods by which a minister may take a forecast before losing his youth. How shall he provide for the troublesome years which are to come?

Sometimes a minister, by the practice of the strictest economy, lays up money for the future. It is generally a poor man that does this. I knew one who, if some parishioner sent in a peck of potatoes, estimated the value and deposited that cash amount in the bank. But with most men the salary will not allow the prospect of any astonishing fortune. Nor is it at all uncommon for those who have saved by counting every cent to lose their money in Western investments, especially if a retired minister out there is the agent. There are very unpleasant histories of this kind. Laid aside from preaching because of the demand for youth, his income ceases and, with his little property gone, he reads about the ravens.

Sometimes affection and good worldly fortune unite in marrying a rich wife, or at least one who is certain to inherit a handsome property. There is no reason in the nature of things why such a course may not be commended. It prevents anxiety. It enables one to be liberal in charities. But, unfortunately, there are not enough such ravens to supply the whole ministry. In fact, they are very few. In the history of the early Methodists in this country, it is told of one itinerant that he had a wife whose home was comfortable and property considerable. His own mind was easy, and his position did not seem to hurt his spirituality. He was almost the envy of his brethren. It is told, however, of another happy itinerant that his favorite hymn was,

> "No foot of land do I posses,
> No cottage in this wilderness."

Somebody gave him a homestead, but it so destroyed his peace when he could not sing his old hymn, that he gave back the property, and went about happy again in his old song.

Some men are wise enough to foresee the evil, and hide themselves in permanent secretaryships, agencies, or editorial chairs. Why not? These generally have good incomes, and the duties are agreeable. I was just forgetting to mention professorships. These are decidedly stable. No capricious parish can disturb the occupant. He can glide along in serene repose, resting upon the endowments. The cruse of oil does not fail. But, indeed, there are not enough of such places to supply the demand. There was but one such barrel of meal in the whole East.

One's mind naturally turns to the insurance agencies and the book agencies which furnish employment to many ministers when out of their natural service. I think that such men are generally successful. I told the high officials of one company that a certain excellent brother ought to have a large salary on account of his air of affectionate benevolence. He would be worth all the salary if he merely sat in the office to inspire confidence. The book agent can always go to his personal friends, and until he has exhausted this field he will have much success. Perhaps I may vary my statement so as to include a case in my knowledge, where the patient and faithful wife of a minister helplessly feeble went about carrying a heavy bag containing buttons, needles, thread, scissors, and such other articles, which people bought as much out of kindness toward the heroic woman as to supply their needs. The woman's weary feet traversed many a country mile.

I do not think that one ought to encourage anybody to imitate the effort of one aged minister, a godly man, now gone to heaven, who lived alone and tried to get a moderate living through keeping hens. It was all that the hapless man could find to do, but he never complained. But the hens did not prove to be ravens. Fortunately his last years were made comfortable in a Christian home.

There is another resource which is a most comforting one. It is when the minister looks upon some affectionate children, growing up to be upright and faithful sons and daughters, who may make him and the mother a home above all want when the exigency shall have come. I am inclined to think that the investment made in the education of these children is the wisest and best possible, even in a worldly point of view. Happy is the minister who has such sons and daughters and who feels no anxiety as to the care of the partner whom he may leave in the world. But even willing sons and daughters are not always able to do what they would. Besides, no minister can enjoy idleness when he is able to work.

I ought not to leave this subject without expressing wonder, though this has often been said, that the age at which a lawyer or physician is recognized as being at his best and receives the largest income of his life is the age at which the minister is thrown aside. His experience is of inestimable value. His knowledge is thorough. His advice is most valuable. Not all men keep up their studies or understand the needs of the times. Not all men have the glitter of pulpit oratory. Not all men, I regret to say, preserve their sympathies with young life. But the great majority is made up of men whom our

Ravens.

churches should delight to keep in service. Our system, or defiance of system, is most wasteful. It hurts the churches, it hurts the ministry. A continuance of this spirit and practice will certainly work incalculable harm in our churches. As a rule, boys cannot do the work of men, or young men just out of school do the work of mature experience.

Half-way.

March 19, 1896.

I AM betrayed into exposing the fact that I furnished some short communications to the *Recorder* and to *The Congregationalist* forty years ago. The word "half-way" struck my fancy, and insured the betrayal. Half the life of this newspaper is a long period, not altogether because of years, but also because of structural life. I was at that time too modest to affix my name, and quite a long article of mine, printed early in 1858, bore the appropriate signature "A. B. C." It was a controversial article upon a feature of church order. A council had decided that a certain pastorate had legally ceased, but ecclesiastically remained. If I were now to sum up the argument, I should quote the Irishman who said, regarding a hole in the bank, that he had dug the bank all away and left the hole sticking up all by itself.

There were two papers in 1856, the old *Recorder* and the new *Congregationalist*. The *Recorder* was edited by Rev. Parsons Cooke and Rev. Samuel H. Riddel. Each of these was an able man. Parsons Cooke was an extremely powerful man, and thoroughly orthodox. On the page of *The Congregationalist* was modestly printed, "Edited by pastors of Congregational churches." I was not in the secret, and I did not know who these were, excepting, of course, Henry M. Dexter and Andrew L. Stone. Dr. Dexter had won my undying regard in 1852 by a kindly complimentary editorial sentence regarding a so-called oration given by me at the Porter Rhetorical anniversary in the Old South Church at Andover when our class graduated. There was a great throng present at the double anniversary, which included the Society of Inquiry also, two speakers being chosen for each society by the whole body of students. Fancy my consternation two years ago, when temporarily engaged in some homiletic work at Andover, I did not find a single student who had ever heard of the "Porter Rhet." I feel sure that the abandonment of its weekly debates, of the discussions in theology by students in turn, and of the Thursday afternoon orations has been a serious injury to Andover.

However, that kind sentence by Dr. Dexter has influenced my life in one particular. It impressed me, as I grew older, with the value of a kindly appreciative remark to an earnest young man. It also led me into a warm friendship with Dr. Dexter, beginning in 1853. In looking over the Minutes of 1855 I find the astounding fact that "Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, Rev. Parsons Cooke, and Rev. Thomas T. Richmond" were made publishing committee by the General Association, which meant the commencement of my statistical work, and, the following year, the secretaryship of the General Association, which lasted for twenty-five years. For twenty-three years of that period

the work which now commands five hundred dollars a year was done gratuitously.

The two papers were going on side by side. Theologically, I preferred the *Recorder*. By personal intimacies I preferred *The Congregationalist*. What I preferred, however, made no difference to either of them, Good men, grand men, were engaged upon each. Their lives flowed into the organic life of these two papers. The two started from different sources, but under similar laws of life and really from a common origin. The two were destined to come together when the sharpness of divergencies once needful had worn off.

I have stood at Jefferson's Rock upon the height of Harper's Ferry in springtime. The view had the beauty of which Jefferson wrote. On the right hand came down the Shenandoah and on the left came the Potomac. The two met at the foot of the headland. In the enormous rise of the spring waters the two had different colors. So strong was the contrast that one could see the two rivers flowing side by side in the one river so far as the eye could reach. Scarcely any imaginary line divided them. Far down below, the distinction began to fade and the two intermingled and went on to the ocean in color which was neither the one nor the other.

There are different ways of editorial management. I think that Parsons Cooke remained a pastor while editing the *Recorder*. Pastors edited *The Congregationalist*. It was not considered so great a task then to edit a religious newspaper but that pastors could do their work in their leisure hours. I suppose the story is well known that when a religious editorial article was demanded of Dr. Stone he would hastily seize one of his sermons, tear out three or four leaves, quickly prefix a slight introduction, and give the papers to the boy who was waiting. Perhaps this was just as well as to write an editorial in a hurry. But it was not editorial work.

Dr. Dexter took personal charge in 1856, half way between 1816 and 1896. In due time it became an apparent necessity that he should relinquish the pastorate or the paper. I think I was moderator of the council called upon his dismissal from the pastorate. I remember that it was seriously questioned by some persons in the council whether it was proper for a minister of Christ to abandon the pastorate and become an editor. May I be permitted to record the fact that in the council which a few years ago ordained one of the present editors of this paper to the work of the ministry, and of which I was moderator, the question was again raised whether we could properly ordain a man to the work of the ministry whose main, though not exclusive, life service was to be that of an editor of a religious newspaper. The few doubting brethren were finally satisfied that it was proper to proceed.

One thing is certain. The religious newspaper has come to have that importance that, if a pastor is to be at the head of its editorial force, the substantial editing and practical management must be in the hands of executive officers. Perhaps here I may correct a misapprehension. I am not on the staff of this paper. They give me quite liberal range for communications, but I have been aching to say that I differed entirely from the Venezuela position of the editorial page. I believed in the President's message through and through. Now that I have freed my mind I feel better. In fact, not being on the staff, I can express my appreciation of the work done so faithfully and so conscientiously upon this paper.

Half-way.

Once I came near having an antiquarian treasure. In 1816 a Dover boy was learning the business of a druggist in Boston. The first number of the *Recorder* was just ready for the press. The boy's employer, a leading man, and much interested, sent him to the office for a copy. The boy was told that if he would wait a few minutes he could have one. The first impression, which was taken in his sight, was delivered to him, and he took it to the master. Other copies were had, but the boy kept the first one as a curiosity. He kept it many years, and with all the early volumes of the paper. After the war of 1861 I went to the family, hoping it would give me that copy. With all the early volumes that special prize had been sold for old paper and had been fed into the mill.

When I went to the war the *Recorder* asked me to write as a regular correspondence, and offered as an inducement to send me a copy of the paper every week. Mr. Richardson, the managing editor, whose value to this paper was scarcely less than that of Dr. Dexter and whose memory I warmly cherish, made a similar proposal for *The Congregationalist*, except that he offered regular payment and as many copies as I wished to distribute among the soldiers. Such was the difference in the business management.

"Half-way" seems a long way back. The indispensable person who writes my every article is saying to me, "Why do you write about forty years ago? The young men don't care what happened then." Perhaps they do not, but they will let some of us remember Parsons Cooke and Henry M. Dexter, the great editors of forty years ago. And I am sure that no one will grudge me the remembrance of the forty years of a somewhat tender relation to the readers of this paper.

The Survival of the Fittest.

No. It is not true. It is a heartless falsehood.

To survive is to outlive. Fittest for what? Fittest to live. To live is to do the work which God has given one to do, with the powers which God has given, and in obedience to him who gave the work and the powers. Life is love. Life is patience. Life is wisdom. Life is faith. Whoso has these has fitness to continue to live. The fittest are those who have the most of these.

They who accomplish best the true object of living as God designed them to live, they who illustrate best the divine power of a pure and noble life, they who spread the sunshine of God where otherwise were darkness and chill, they who comfort and console and strengthen, — these are the best fitted to live. They are the ones who, according to our dim vision, ought to survive. They are the ones who, according to "the survival of the fittest," will survive.

For fitness in God's true world consists in something higher than the bones of an animal or the muscles of a wild beast. It means mental and spiritual life. If one would limit the phrase which I have quoted to the low grade of the animal, he perverts the words, and his ideas are not high enough to make discussion spiritually profitable. If he conceives of God only as embodied in

a ruthless force, marching on through the ages, scattering into destruction on the right hand and on the left all that is weak or needy, he is out of the range of an intelligent fatherhood and a suffering brotherhood.

But does the fittest survive? No. Judged by any actual standard it is impossible to find such a law. The cultivated fruits which skill and patience have learned how to fashion are short-lived. The greater the refinement of generations the less is the certainty of perpetuity. I do not say that this is inevitable, but I do not say that no one can shut his eyes to the fact that this supposed law is utterly absent from what we see in daily life.

We see the student under the Bonnie Brier Bush, just ready by his mental endowments and his spiritual experiences to be a power for good in the world. The author of that story pictured life, when the visible life went out. The author has pictured other characters. Did the fittest for God's work survive? Who has not seen similar instances everywhere? Who has not seen the most promising teachers of Christ's love suddenly taken away, while the ignorant and the profane keep on? Who has not seen some man in society, upright, philanthropic, inspiring, whose influence spread goodness around him, pass from sight, while the profligate and the intemperate survive? The coarse outlives the refined; is it therefore the fittest for this life? The selfish outlasts the generous; is it the fittest? The corrupt outlasts the pure; is it the fittest? The inhuman outlasts the gentle; is it the fittest? The Turk survives his victims; is ferocity the fittest?

I know well enough that somebody will say that I do not take the words as some thinkers usurp them. They are a high-sounding formula which must be limited to mere physical things, and mean toughness, not fitness. Then why not say so, and not pervert language? Even on this ground they are not proven. They would mean only that that survives which is powerful enough to survive. It would be hard to dispute such a tautological saying. But it omits even then the presence and power of an intelligent and loving God, who does "not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." It excludes tenderness and love and mercy and fatherly care. It forgets a suffering and divine Saviour, a supernatural spirit, a redemptive love. But the words must be taken as they read and sound. Ah me, they are not true. The fittest to adorn and honor life, to fill needful places in loving hearts, to do good in the spirit of Christ — do they survive? Parents whom, in my ministry of these years, I have found suffering unspeakable sorrow, do you admit that those whom you mourned disappeared because of the law of fitness which ruled them out of life? Was the scientific assertion, if anybody had the savageness to use it, anything but a torturing insult? Were you not forced to compare the pure-hearted, the loving, the useful, the good with a multitude of the useless, the unfaithful, the selfish? Did you not wonder at the inscrutable mystery which ended the earthly life of your dear ones who were so well fitted to live? You ran against the darkness which no one can explain. You were driven into the region of faith alone; faith which rises above the machinery of a machine deity into the spiritual grandeur and glory of a spiritual realm. No philosophy sufficed for you. No magnificent conceptions even of the material life of the ages were your comfort. When loving friends send messages to the stricken, these messages are always about the loving Father and his tender

The Survival of the Fittest.

heart, about the careful Shepherd of the Psalmist, about the blessed Elder Brother and his cross, and about the heavenly land where the departed walk in eternal joy. Hearts meet hearts in loving touch, and the lesson is learned that no theories can stand which in any way ignore the heart. In the calm of the hiding place with God there is a knowledge which disdains the conclusions of a reason that leaves out the essential of life.

Not long ago a life went out from sight. It was a brilliantly gifted life, a sunny, patient, brave, useful life; a life of often self-denial to enable her to help others. In it was recognized the nobility of a yet early but high womanhood. That life was always watchful to make others happy. It was a life of devoted love to parents and brothers and sister. It illustrated the capacity for usefulness of a life hid with Christ in God. When that life went out of the visible, was it because of lack of fitness for God's work here? That it was so nobly fitted is what makes the mystery. The mainspring of this life in its relation to others was well found in a favorite extract from some author which was carried out in daily act, which had been copied for a near friend and sent not long before departure. It was read where the casket with all that it stood upon was utterly hidden by the masses of rare and beautiful flowers, which lavish friends had bestowed; read as the testimony, still better than these, to her life. I quote the extract in the hope that it may become an inspiration to some similar life:—

"Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words while their ears can hear them, and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them. The kind things you meant to say when they are gone, say before they go. The flowers you meant to send for their coffins, send to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them. If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection which they intend to break over my dead body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them."

She had such blessedness in her own life, and she gave it richly to others. Can one tell why such a life ends so early here? No. Faith understands that it was God's perfect will.

And yet those thus fitted for the highest living do survive. They merely pass on, and they see the King in his beauty.

His High Connections.

It is fresh in mind that as a result of recent disturbances in the Transvaal several persons received sentence of death for acknowledged treasonable practices. Of course, it is seldom that political offences, although treasonable (unless it be those of Irishmen), are now expected to receive severe punishment, and the sentences referred to have been commuted. But before this almost immediate suspension of sentence could be heard of, a request was hastily signed by most of our national senators and representatives, asking Transvaal clemency for the American who was unfortunate enough to be included in the list of the

condemned. This petition, drawn by a senator, gave two reasons for clemency, — one his previous good character, the other "his high connections." The latter phrase was used twice. Evidently it was considered by the senator who prepared the paper as a powerful argument.

In such a semi-official action, is such a consideration really in good taste? Is it in accord with the American principle in our intercourse with other nations? Is it free from the danger that the government to which it was addressed would be led to suppose that a man who did not have "high connections" would not have excited so much interest among the members of our great legislative body?

I do not believe that, in the haste of signing, anybody but the mover noticed this particular expression. But it is unpleasantly suggestive. And yet I do not believe that in offcial action, and in careful scrutiny of any proposed resolve, either branch would allow any expression which would suggest anything derogatory to the equality of American citizenship. I am thoroughly sure that the executive branch of our Government looks only to the rights of American citizens as such, and their needs when in trouble, simply because they are citizens. The poorest and loneliest man is entitled to just the same protection under that flag which so many thousands of poor men fought and died to uphold as men who have "high connections." This is the American idea, this is the idea which our Government has always honorably maintained. To the honor of our judiciary I can positively assert my conviction, after observing the work of our New England courts for a goodly number of years, that our judges are never swerved from their duty by any considerations of poverty on the one hand or of high connections on the other. Indeed, if there is any bending I think it is toward the ignorant and friendless.

Within a week I saw a repetition of what connects itself with the theory of discrimination, namely, that the government exists to promote the greatest good of the greatest number. How such a wicked theory could have been suggested in a land which holds to equal rights it is hard to conceive. We have no privileged classes who are to be favored at the expense of others. Government exists to promote the greatest good of the *whole* number. It ought not to subtract from the good of a minority to add what is thus taken to the good of others. The fact that that minority is evidently needy is the reason why it should not be abandoned in promoting the prosperity of the greatest number. The sentence which I have quoted is the rule of majorities run into oppression. It tramples upon the needs of the needy, the appeal of the helpless. Nor can there be any greater fallacy than to suppose that the greatest good of the greatest number can really be promoted except by those things which promote the good of all. The moment that discrimination comes in, so that measures are adopted theoretically calculated to help classes and ignore the suffering remnant, that moment there will be a poison in the measures themselves. If the government should exert its influence discriminatingly for men of high connections, the government would begin to lose its hold. Government knows only citizens. It helps everybody if it is to help anybody; unless it is adapted to help everybody it is essentially a partial failure.

I have written so far frankly to express political views. But I would not

His High Connections.

have done it except that underneath the whole is the Christian idea. It is the idea of the church in the world. It is the idea of the gospel in the heart of the church. There are no different gospels for different classes. There is no gospel good for anybody unless it is a gospel which by its divine and essential nature is good for everybody. There is no gospel for the educated and another for the uneducated. There is no gospel for wealth and another gospel for poverty. There is no gospel for one social standing and another for another social standing. There is no metaphysical gospel for one class and a plain gospel for another. Underneath all distinctions of class, education, and philosophies must be the one simple gospel. If any supposed gospel is not adapted to the wants of every man it is not a true gospel.

Why not? Because all men alike are sinners. This is the fundamental assumption of the Christian gospel. All men need to repent of sin and turn to to God. Jesus Christ our divine Lord suffered for the sins of the whole world, bearing their sins in his own body. To be born again of the Holy Ghost is the universal necessity. Men may, of course, disbelieve in these statements, but I am stating what is essential and absolute in the New Testament gospel. Where then are distinctions within the gospel possible? There is a common need. There are times when heart speaks to heart out from groups in society to those in other groups. Times when the common experience of trouble finds a common Lord; a common experience of spiritual need finds a common Saviour. A gospel which is not adapted to all persons is not a genuine gospel.

In one of the great New York churches, perhaps fifteen years ago, I heard the most honored preacher of that city. In the home to which I was invited for dinner I expressed some surprise at the simplicity and directness of the sermon which I had heard, and I asked how such simple gospel sermons kept the house full of the class of people who were evidently present. "We have, indeed," answered the lady, "a great number of wealthy people. But we are plain people, after all, who know that we need the simple gospel and nothing else would satisfy us." She was right. A gospel for that avenue could do no good in that avenue if it was not the gospel for the poorest streets of that city. Crowds may be drawn in some localities by brilliant unbelief. I am writing now only of what kind of gospel is to make earnest Christians, spiritual churches, and successful workers, wherever those Christians worship, wherever those churches are established, and wherever faithful people work.

Some years ago, in the church of Notre Dame, Montreal, a genial priest showed some of us the rich vestments there in use. By and by he showed his greatest treasure. It was a rich cloth, most lavishly and expensively embroidered with gold. "There," said the kind-hearted old man, with his eyes glistening, "is the pall which is placed over the coffins of poor people. For many years I begged the money for this, and now the poorest man can have as fine a funeral as the richest." There was something touching in the old man's words. Maybe he remembered that as all men are equal in death, so Christ died for all men alike.

The Policeman at the Crossing.

Oct. 8, 1896.

THE crossing is a crowded one where two important streets cross each other. At the four corners are respectively a stone church, a great hotel, an immense business establishment which sells nearly everything, and an eleven-story mammoth structure which deforms the land upon which it stands. Not far off are the State House, the Court House, and the City Hall; and the elevator entrance to the Congregational Library is just one hundred steps from the crossing when properly walked. It is really a dangerous crossing. In the centre of one street electric cars are continually passing in opposite directions on the two tracks. The long street is narrow, and it is used by pleasure carriages, heavy wagons laden with great burdens like brick or stone, lighter carts transporting goods, and, most troublesome of all, bicycles whose riders as usual create the most danger and are the most defiant as to any decent respect for the rights or safety of others. During the business hours of the city throngs pass to and fro at this point. The confusion is excessive. I have heard it stated that a hundred street cars pass in an hour.

To cross the tracks at this point, and evade at the same time the other sources of danger, would ordinarily require a sharp eye and a quick foot in resolute and able-bodied persons. For women and children and for any physically weak the danger is great. That is, it would be so if it were not that the policeman detailed for the purpose stands on the crossing between the two tracks and rules with magical power. He stands there with a calmness almost as quiet as that of Benjamin Franklin's statue near by, but with movements, when any are necessary, of easy grace and bearing. He brings order out of confusion. He makes a safe path through the midst of the apparently dangerous forces. He never gets angry, he is never impatient. He is an autocrat of benevolence.

There was a similar official in the fearful tumult near the Bank of England, but I adopted there an ingenious method of crossing. It was to take an omnibus which came close to the curbstone and, climbing to the top, ride half a mile or so to a place where there was little travel, leave that vehicle, cross the street, take another, and go back to the point on the same street which I wished to reach. But at our crossing we get over easily. Some people boldly dash across, but I humbly admit that I prefer waiting until a little group is collected, and the policeman with a gentle wave of the hand beckons us forward. With the same hand he waves back all vehicles upon his right, and with his left hand he as quietly magnetizes those coming in an opposite direction into motionless obedience. The horses draw back upon their haunches. The lightning of the street car finds its master. Even the bicycle is brought to decency. I have studied this so many times, and have found the potency of this trusty and unselfish policeman so valuable that it has made a profound impression upon me.

He is always handsomely dressed in his dark blue uniform, and wears spotless white gloves. I cannot say that I admire his helmet, but he says it is shaped so as to shed rain. He is a well-formed person, tall, of proper weight,

The Policeman at the Crossing.

muscular and erect without being stiff. He is courteous in his bearing, and particularly helpful to the lame or aged, whom he will often escort across. He is not talkative, but will answer questions if he can reasonably do so.

He is only a policeman. But a policeman may have a heart. I remember one at the corner of Boylston Street two or three years ago, who, when the strings had come off from a bundle of pasteboard boxes which fell to the sidewalk, said to the boy who was carrying them and who was almost crying, "Pick up your boxes and hold them together, and I will tie them up for you." This was done. I said to the policeman, "Is it a part of your work to help boys with bundles?" "Ah, sir," said he, "we are all here to help each other." A policeman is a man. I felt very sorry when one of my old regiment who had for many a year patrolled the block in which the Congregational House stands was placed in another locality. It had been a great pleasure to me to shake hands with him many a day, and have his cheerful greeting, "Well, chaplain!" One day he showed me a letter, forgotten by myself, written after a great battle to a patron of his, in which I had said that K. had done his duty finely. He had recently obtained the letter, and said he was going to frame it for his children. Policemen have hearts.

Our policeman at the crossing is doubtless paid for his work. But pay in money is not the equivalent for his courtesy and faithfulness. It is a great thing for a man in any position of life to do his duty. Metaphysically speaking, I suppose one cannot properly say "do his duty well." With a high sense of duty he cannot do his duty unless he does it well. But, after all, there are men who do not quite get up to this high sense, and practically we make a distinction. Practically also we should acknowledge a higher standard whenever we find it. Certainly, when I am escorted across I am generally weak enough to say, "Thank you." A mere official service is one thing; a careful, watchful, generous service is something higher.

But how does this man have the power to motion back the horses and the motor-governed cars which could ride him down in a moment? Why does he stand there without the movement of a muscle directly in front of them? Of course, it is simply because the State of Massachusetts has placed him there and, though he be unarmed and only one man, he represents the power of the State. He is the embodiment of law. Take off his helmet and substitute a brown coat in place of his blue one and bone buttons in place of gilt, and any effort on his part to make a path would be laughed at. But in his official position this humble policeman is a lesson of law. He is also a lesson of the care of the Government for its citizens. A government is to protect much more than to punish. The police detective of crime is of course necessary, but I like better to think of the policeman who assists the needy. Are we quite sure that the divine government is not as well exemplified at our crossing as it is in the police court?

I have concluded that in the midst of any excitement of parties and passion I shall continue to rely upon our policeman at the crossing. The busy hum of traffic will go on in the streets. The motor cars will travel to and fro under the power of an unchangeable force. I shall need to cross the street, how

many times I know not,* and many another will also cross, and I have the firmest faith that our policeman will be there to help us when the new year shall have come in. Fortunately, he serves under the Civil Service rules, and the quarrels of parties will not warp him. And when public results become history, and some people are successful and some are disappointed, the warnings of woe and destruction will, as heretofore in similar cases, have come to naught. We shall find at the crossing our policeman, in his handsome coat and white gloves, waving back the dangers and making a clear path, as ever the symbol of law and the evidence that the State and nation remain in dignity and security.

THE END.

* Dr. Quint died in a little less than a month after this article appeared. It was the last he wrote.

INDEX.

	PAGE
According to Order	161
Anchored	127
"And for His Better Encouredgement"	200
Anonymous	163
Another	116
As He Did Aforetime	147
As to Extempore Preaching	34
Baseball and New Bonnets	134
Begin Early	72
Church Discipline	3
Commencements	139
Compromise	206
Concerning Club-Houses	1
Conscientious Contentiousness	47
Conscientious Convictions	178
Country Church, A	192
Definiteness	183
Delayed Development	143
Differings	157
Don't Let the Time be Wasted, Brethren	9
Don't Prove Too Much	43
Do You Know Him?	159
Experiences	150
Except They be Agreed	204
Faithful	198
Filberts	212
Fixed Values	145
Forms	61
Fundamental Question in the Church To-day, The	65
Giving Advice	210
Going to Meeting	13
Good Old Times	180
Grasshopper Religion	202
Grooves	185
Growing Old Gracefully	114
Half-way	216
Harmonies	32
His High Connections	220
Honor Bound	125
Hooks and Eyes vs. Buttons	152

PAGE

How Shall I Understand? 56
How to Get Rid of the Minister 17
I Don't Know 50
Impartial Judgment 189
Impracticable 25
Infelicities 11
Injustices 154
In Time of Need 95
Is a Church a Prison? 5
It Means Federation 54
Jig-saw Religion 45
Legal and Moral 194
Little Changes which may be Noted 7
Little Kindnesses 101
Lopsided 141
Make the Gospel Attractive 28
Misunderstandings 173
Movable 123
My Friend 105
New Times and New Men 91
No Need of Haste 171
Not Now 111
Obligations to One's College 168
Old Folks, The 84
One Aspect of Christian Liberty 57
One Test 49
Opportunity 103
Perambulators 82
Policeman at the Crossing, The 223
Preaching One's Self 30
Providential 176
Pure Truth 69
Ravens 214
Ready to Depart on the Morrow 22
Reasonable Accuracy 137
Re-discovered Christ, The 52
Religion of Hire, The 196
Religion without Theology 63
Remembered 165
Results 78
Safety Valves 93
Sarsaparillas, The 208
Sealed Orders 187
Seen and Unseen 118
Shall we get Rid of the Minister? 20
Something about Soldiers 98
Standards 41
Sunshine for the Child 79

PAGE

Survival of the Fittest, The 218
Temporary 131
Ten Years without Smoke 87
The Majority Must Rule 15
"This Indenture Witn" 129
Unseen Channels 120
Wasting Ammunition 59
What She Could 108
What Thanksgiving Implies 75
When the Tide Comes In 36
Which Is Best 39
Who Says It? 67

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